

Bi Women

February - March, 1990



Cosmo Strikes!

BiCEP, the Bisexual Committee Engaging in Politics, sent the following letter to *Cosmopolitan* magazine in response to a horrendously biphobic article on bisexuality in their October issue entitled "The Risky Business of Bisexual Love." Other bi organizations and individuals in Boston, New York, San Francisco, and elsewhere have written protest letters and have stuffed newsstand copies of *Cosmo* with bi-positive literature. In their December issue, *Cosmo* printed two responses from readers. One was from a woman who wrote that *Cosmo* should have included more about bisexual men and AIDS, and the other was from a woman who wrote that she, too, had had one of those sneaky bi men as a boyfriend.

Dear *Cosmo*:

We are an organization comprised of bisexual women and men based in Boston called BiCEP, the Bisexual Committee Engaging in Politics. We were appalled at the misinformation and false stereotypes contained in the article "The Risky Business of Bisexual Love" in *Cosmo's* October issue. The authors state that "No other minority is so understudied or so misunderstood," and then proceed to quote from unreference research sources that completely misunderstand us. If it weren't for the fact that your

cont. on pg. 3

"BIWOMEN" IN DANGER OF EXTINCTION

This will be my last issue as editor of *BiWomen*, at least for the near future. Although I have had some loyal women helping me out, no one has shown an interest in taking on the co-editorship role, and I am no longer willing or able to continue as the sole editor. What that means for the future of the newsletter, I don't know. I've been making calls to women who checked "newsletter" off on their renewal forms under the volunteer opportunities column. So far only one of these women has helped out (thanks, Christina!). I still have a few more numbers to call...maybe one of them will belong to our future editor. If not, there may not be an April/May edition of *BiWomen*.

The Bisexual Women's Network is only what we, its members make of it. When the editorship is shared and rotated, when members pitch in to help with layout, when people send in articles, letters, poetry and news of interest, this newsletter is a vibrant and exciting publication. It is also fun to work on. It is great to hear people's appreciation of our efforts. But we also need your participation. Otherwise there is no newsletter.

Ann Goglia

The Newsletter of the Boston Bisexual Women's Network

THE CASE OF
THE MISSING CC MINUTES

In case you're wondering why you have not seen any Coordinating Committee Meeting Minutes in the newsletter recently, it's because there has not been an official CC meeting for some months. Partially this has been because of poor attendance. We are going to start meeting at the Community Center--that might make it easier for some women. If the next two scheduled meetings don't work out, we will be brainstorming a new strategy for making BBWN decisions. Your suggestions are welcome!!

BBWN NOW STAFFING BI OFFICE
(subtitled: Live Bisexuals on the Telephone)

We are now staffing our office at 338 Newbury Street in Boston (near Tower Records and the Auditorium T stop). Office hours will be Monday evenings from 6-9 p.m. We are looking for more volunteers to work either of two overlapping shifts: 6-8 and 7-9 p.m. If you are interested, please call (617) BIS-MOVE and leave a message on our phone line. We will provide all necessary training.

LEND US YOUR EYES...

BBWN maintains an archive of materials related to bisexuality at our office at 338 Newbury Street. We ask each of you to keep your eyes open for any written materials related to bisexuality. Newspaper clippings (please list source), magazine & journal articles, newsletters from other groups, academic papers, dissertations and theses are all welcome. Please mail materials to BBWN, c/o GLSC, 338 Newbury St., Boston MA 02115.

If you are interested in looking at our existing archives, stop by our office on a Monday evening between 6 and 9 p.m.

FROM THE ECBN TREASURER

In order to keep the books up-to-date, I must get all ECBN receipts within a reasonable period of time after they are incurred. Therefore, beginning after March 1, 1990, only expenses incurred during the prior 90 days will be reimbursed. People have until March 1, 1990 to get in receipts from last spring conference, etc. Remember, this is the final amnesty for the late receipts!

Thanks,

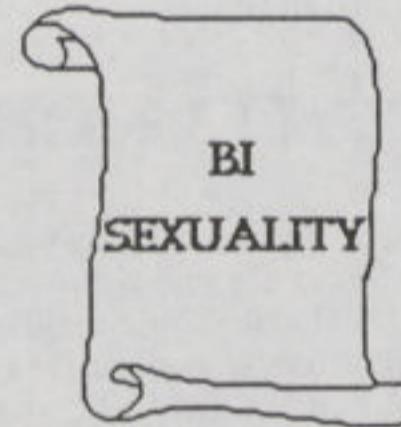
Alan Hamilton

\$

ECBN OFFERS SCHOLARSHIP FUND

The East Coast Bisexual Network is committed to making bisexual activism accessible to and represented by everyone, and have established a small fund to assist people attending the 1990 Bisexual Conference in San Francisco June 20-24. First priority in awarding scholarships will be given to low income bisexual people of color. Other low income people are also invited to apply. If you are a resident of an eastern state and you would require a scholarship in order to attend the conference, please contact: Lorraine Hutchins, 6104 3rd St., NW, Washington DC 20011, (202) 882-4384 home w/tape machine. All calls returned with discretion). For more information about the 1990 Bisexual Conference, and/or about the "1990 Bisexual People of Color Caucus" which will be meeting at the 1990 Conference, write BiPol, 584 Castro St., #422, San Francisco CA 94114 or call (415) 775-1990.

\$



A NATIONAL NEWSLETTER

* * *

For Info, Send

SASE To:

Gibbin Publications

P.O. Box 20917

Long Beach, CA 90801-3917

TELEPHONE (617) 498-9923

BET MACARTHUR, ACSW LICSW
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continued from page 1

magazine has such a large circulation, this article would be laughable. However the damage you wreak by publishing trash like this is enormous.

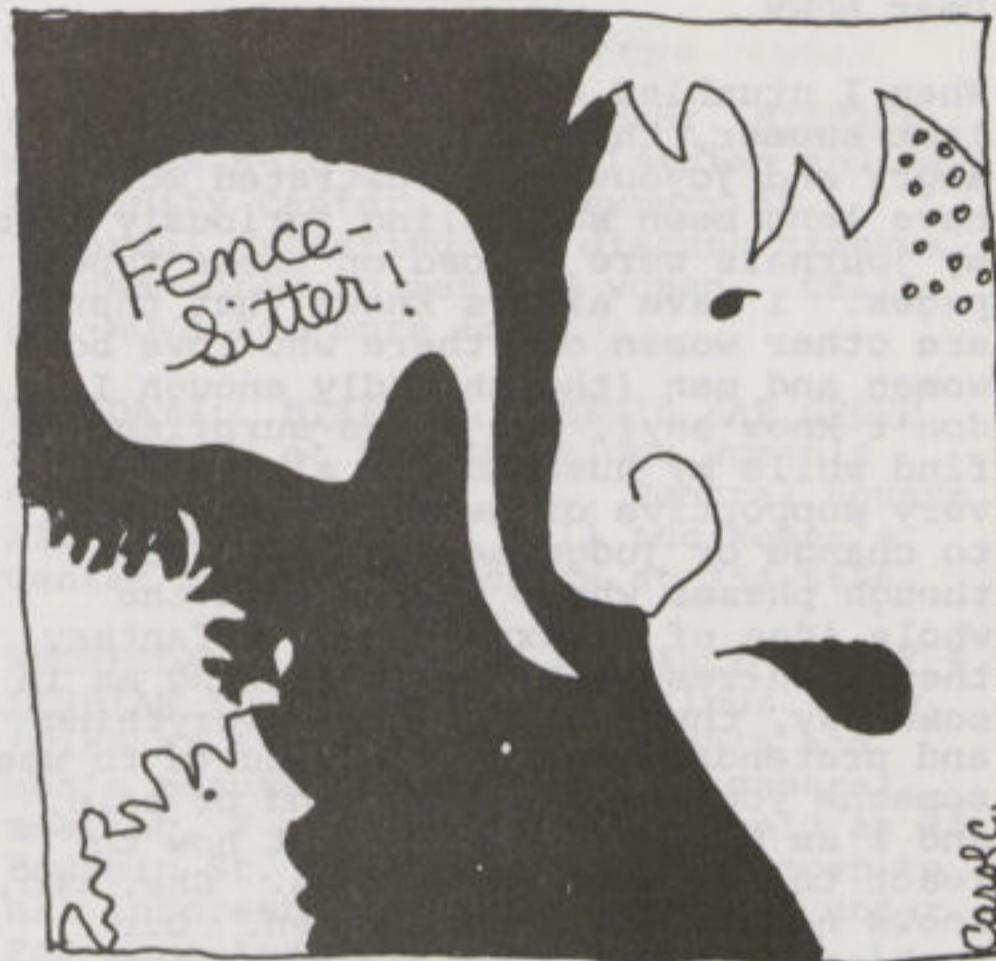
One of the main obstacles for bisexuals, men and women, in telling people about their bisexuality is the harmful prejudices bisexuals encounter – that they're untrustworthy, selfish, confused, and negligent in practicing safer sex. Your article feeds into these myths and ultimately worsens the climate for bisexuals trying to "come out," i.e. go public with their bisexuality. This kind of journalism is irresponsible and life-endangering. The last thing we can afford in this age of AIDS and increasing violence against bisexuals and gays is further discouragement about talking openly about sex and sexuality.

The claim that there are only one-seventh as many women bisexuals as men is astonishing. Our experience in local and national bisexual organizing leads us to believe that this statistic (which came from where?) is way off. Do you know how many of your readers are bisexual women? Have you ever considered writing an article about bi women who feel good about their sexuality, rather than alienating your bi readers with stereotypes that *they know* are wrong? It is completely ridiculous to assert that women's homosexual urges are satisfied through casual, public displays of affection. *Cosmo*, which considers itself to be the premier magazine about women's sexuality, should know better than that. Why is this article, like so many other *Cosmo* articles, geared towards women pleasing and keeping men rather than women's own pleasure?

We know many of your readers are bisexual or have had satisfying relationships with bisexual men. We urge that these women, and any other women or men questioning their sexuality, connect with one of the many networks and support groups that exist for bisexuals in this country. They may want to attend the first International Conference on Bisexuality which is being held in San Francisco June 20-24, 1990. The address and phone number for the North American Bisexual Network, which functions as a national information source for bi networks, events, and resources, is: NABN, 584 Castro Street, #422, San Francisco, CA 94114, Tel. (415) 564-2226.

Next time you publish an article about bisexuals, don't bother with your stable of "expert" sociologists and therapists who consider bisexuality a social disease. Instead, talk to the many bi's who are openly and proudly bisexual and are building a world that's safer, not more hostile, for all bisexuals.

Lucy Friedland for BiCEP
The Bisexual Committee Engaging in Politics



FIGHT 'BI'SEXISM IN EVERY NOOK AND CRANIUM!

NEW MAILING ADDRESS FOR BBWN!!!

BBWN has decided to phase out our post office box and have mail delivered directly to our office at: c/o GLSC, 338 Newbury Street, Boston MA 02115. This will eliminate the delays created by our current method of mail pick up, sorting and distribution, and enable us to open, distribute and respond to mail during our Monday evening office hours. Please make a note of this change.

WOMEN ON THE VERGE OF A NATIONAL BREAKTHROUGH!!!

LIBANA, A women's world music ensemble, seeks new members. Strong vocal skills a must. Folk dance experience or instrumental skills a plus. For further info: LIBANA, POB 530, Cambridge, MA 02140 (617) 395-1920

CATHY McDERMOTT, ACSW, LICSW

PSYCHOTHERAPIST

SUITE 83
875 MASS. AVE.
CAMBRIDGE, MA.

497-0539

Dear BBWN,

When I stumbled onto your newsletter last summer, the swirl of alternately angry and joyous and frustrated words I have long been scribbling furiously into my journals were echoed on those typed pages. I have always known that there are other women out there who love both women and men (though oddly enough I don't know any), but I was surprised to find while my husband has always been very supportive of me and sees no need to change or judge me, my lover goes through phases where she rejects the whole idea of bisexuality as a fantasy, then agonizes that she is failing me in some way, then just ignores everything and pretends I am gay. It hurts to see someone you love in that kind of pain, and I am usually at a loss at how to react to these various moods. She, too, knows no other bisexual women. Our lesbian friends--warm, generous and accepting though they may be in other ways--are where the matter of bisexuality is concerned largely condescending, suspicious and prone to believe that I am naturally insincere, and that I am denying my "true" self. They are divided, apparently, on what this true self is: half believe I am gay and just using my husband's existence as a blind (the fabled "marriage of convenience," although I fail to see what's convenient about it), the others that I am straight and just experimenting, and will inevitably go back to men as a full-time fare.

It's true that I am far from settled completely in my life, for I am at heart a monogamous person somehow caught up in a nonmonogamous existence where "choosing" seems like the right thing to do, but not the thing that feels most right. But it is also true that I am at least, and at last, settled in my soul: I know that I am not an "either/or" denying some basic reality; I am just a woman who loves women and men. And I owe a great deal of that newly found inner security to your newsletter.

name withheld



January 2, 1990

Dear Wonderful BBWN Women,

Thank you for all your hard work and this great newsletter. Congratulations on the new Bisexual Community Resource Office in the Boston Gay/Lesbian Community Center. The visibility of all bisexual people is the key for the 90's.

I would like us, as bisexuals, to take the lessons we have learned from other movements and be as conscious as we possibly can in this our budding bisexual community/movement. As we organize ourselves we have to be aware of and struggle with the fact of institutionalized racism, and our own internalized racism. I trust that each of us believes this is the path we must take if our bisexual movement is to be truly representative. I don't pretend that this is an easy task, but as we become a more visible force we have to challenge ourselves and each other. This is an important time. We are building a foundation and the decisions we make now will affect us for a very long time.

I want to encourage all of us to make a commitment to examine how racism has affected us in our lives, and to educate ourselves on institutionalized racism so each of us can break down the barriers in our communities that separate us from each other.

I am a member of the 1990 Bisexual People of Color Caucus working with the 1990 National Bisexual Conference being held June 20-24 in San Francisco. The main focus of our group is visibility of our issues especially AIDS, networking, and building multicultural alliances. I invite those interested in forming a caucus in their community to contact Conference headquarters: 1990 POCC 584 Castro #422 SF, CA 94114 (415) 775-1990.

Thank you again for your newsletter, it
is an important life line for many
women.

Aloha,

Lani Kaahumanu



We wish the many wonderful women who helped out the Network in December and January lots of warm fuzzies and warm company for the upcoming months.

Marge L.	Lynne L.
Charnan B.	Ann G.
Claire M.	Lucy F.
Sharon G.	Laura S.
Robyn O.	Christina S.
Pam L.	Liz N.
Carol C.	Tamara B.

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WANTED! IN PERSON OR BY MAIL

Women to help with our newsletter. We need women to submit articles, new items and graphics, women to layout, cut and paste--or better still, women with access to desktop publishing! SAVE THE NEWSLETTER!!

ONGOING

First SUNDAYS of each month: BISPACE meetings 8-10 pm at the Lesbian and Gay Community Center, 338 Newbury St. Informal gatherings to discuss bisexual issues--open to men and women. Call BIS-MOVE for more info.

TUESDAYS: BISEXUAL WOMEN'S RAP GROUP 7:30-10 pm at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., Central Square. All women welcome. Call the Women's Center for weekly topics at 354-6658.

WEDNESDAYS: BOSTON'S ALLIANCE OF GAY & LESBIAN YOUTH (BAGLEY) meetings. New folks at 6 pm; separate women's and men's issues groups 6:45 pm; general meeting, 7 pm. All mtgs are held at 35 Bowdoin St. Boston. BAGLEY is open to all interested youth ages 22 and under. For more info call 354-6658.

WEDNESDAYS: ALL-ANON GROUP FOR BISEXUAL ADULT CHILDREN OF ALCOHOLICS 7:30 pm at Mass. General Hospital, lower amphitheater (next to emergency entrance). For more info & directions call Marge 259-1559.

Second WEDNESDAYS of each month: GAY COMMUNITY NETWORKING BREAKFASTS 8 am at Club Cafe (corner of Columbus Ave. & Berkeley Sts.). Breakfasts are free. Call 437-5870 for dates and questions.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

SUPPORT GROUP FORMING: for lesbians who have come out or are coming out as bi. Will meet Mondays from 6-8 pm. Call Pam at 868-7811 for info and location.

AIDS QUESTIONNAIRE

Along with your newsletter, you will find a questionnaire concerning your knowledge about AIDS and about your lifestyle which may have been impacted by AIDS. Since the language is explicit and the subject matter very personal, it is enclosed in an open, preaddressed envelope; it is up to you whether you return it or not, and it is completely anonymous.

The questionnaire is a research project of the "Consultants for Health Care," and not BBWN. However we supportive of this type of research as it may prove to be important to the well being of the community at larg, and the bisexual community in particular.

CALENDAR



FEB 2 (Fri) Lesbian/Gay/Bi Swing & Ballroom Dances present our 1940's Gala!! 8:30 pm-midnight. Swing lesson 8:30-9:15 pm. Casual attire. Beginners welcome. \$4.00 (Get \$1 off admission if you wear something 40's). Free refreshments, great big band music! 2nd floor of Ballet , Etc., 185 Corey Rd., Brookline. Washington St. Stop on the Boston College Green Line. For more info call 617-661-1792.

FEB 4 (Sun) BI-SPACE. A place for all Bis to meet and talk. Very informal-- no agenda or topic. 8 pm. \$2.00 donation to cover costs. Sponsored by ECBN. Community Center, Rm. 203, 338 Newbury St. Boston.

FEB 5 (Mon) BBWN Introductory Meeting. 7:30 pm. Women's Ctr., 46 Pleasant St. Cambridge. All women welcome. Call 247-6683 for more info.

FEB 10 (Sat) International Folk Dance Party sponsored by the Boston Gay and Lesbian Contra Dance Group. Marianne Taylor, caller. 7:30-11 pm. First Church of Jamaica Plain, corner of Centre and Eliot Sts. \$5.00. Call 729-9206 for more info.

FEB 16 (Fri) Boogie with the Bis "On Broadway"--a smoke-free, alcohol-free dance spot. Meet at 9:00 pm. 880 Broadway, Somerville. Circle. Take the Red Line to Davis Sq. and walk up College Ave. to Powderhouse Circle--it's just off the circle.

FEB 17 (Sat) BBWN/BBMN Monthly Chinatown Brunch. Meet at the arch in Chinatown at 10:45 am. Cost is \$6-8 per person. Men and women welcome. Call BIS-MOVE for more info.

FEB 24 (Sat) Contra Dance sponsored by the Boston Gay and Lesbian Contra Dance Group. 8-11 pm. Bis welcome. See FEB 10 for more info.

FEB 26 (Mon) BBWN Volunteer Night. 8-10 pm at the Center. Call BIS-MOVE for more info.

FEB 27 & 28 (Tues, Wed) The Video Store Owner's Significant Other performed by the Cornerstone Theater Company. Adapted from the play The Shoemaker's Prodigious Wife by Frederico Garcia Lorca. 8:00 pm. The Agassiz Theater, Harvard Square, Cambridge. For more info, call 703-556-0353 or the Agassiz box office.

FEB 26 (Mon) DEADLINE FOR APRIL/MAY NEWSLETTER. All articles which need typing/formatting must be received by this date.

MAR 4 (Sun) BISPACE. See FEB 4 for details.

MAR 10 (Sat) The Boston Bis go to the Fine Arts Museum. Tune in at 11:00 am at the Main Entrance (Huntington Ave) of the Museum of Fine Arts. (Free admission til noon on Sats!) Ruggles/Museum on the Green Line or Ruggles on the Orange Line T.

MAR 10 (Sat) Contra Dance sponsored by the Boston Gay and Lesbian Contra Dance Group. 8-11 pm. Band--"Bridges"; Paul Rosenberg, caller. Bis welcome. See FEB 10 for more info.

MAR 12 (Mon) Coordinating Committee Meeting All BBWN women welcome! 8 pm at the Community Center.

MAR 17 (Sat) Monthly Chinatown Brunch. See DEC 16 for details.

MAR 24 (Sat) Contra Dance sponsored by the Boston Gay and Lesbian Contra Dance Group. 8-11 pm. Chris Ricciotti, caller. See FEB 10 for more info.

MAR 26 (Mon) VOLUNTEER NIGHT to stuff the April/May newsletter. 6-10 pm at the Community Ctr., 338 Newbury St, Boston. This is a good time--Don't miss it!

APR 6 (Fri) Lesbian/Gay/Bi Swing & Ballroom Dance. Beginners encouraged! Dance to rock and big band music. See FEB 2 for details (but this dance isn't a 40's Gala).

APR 6 (Fri) MAGPIE presents songs of working people and social change. 8 pm. \$5.00. Watch City Coffeehouse, First Parish Church, 50 Church St., Waltham. Call 647-1055 for more info.

FOR FUTURE PLANNING: June 1990 International Bisexual Conference, sponsored by BI-POL. San Francisco, CA.

For more info write: BI-POL, 584 Castro St., Box 422, SF, CA 94114

BiPOL Presents:

1990 INTERNATIONAL BISEXUAL CONFERENCE

EDUCATE ▼ ADVOCATE ▼ AGITATE

Celebrate!

June 20-24, 1990

San Francisco

PURPOSE:

If you have already organized your conference, you may skip this section.

- PROVIDE BISEXUALS AND BI-FRIENDLY PEOPLE OF ALL AGES, RACES, ETHNICITIES, CULTURES AND PHYSICAL ABILITIES WITH AN OPPORTUNITY TO CELEBRATE OUR DIVERSITY;
- PRESENT A SAFE AND POSITIVE FORUM TO EDUCATE EACH OTHER;
- GIVE BISEXUAL ORIENTATION A STRONG, VALID IDENTITY AND VISIBILITY WITHIN: 1) THE LESBIAN AND GAY COMMUNITIES, 2) SOCIETY AT LARGE;
- CREATE A POSITIVE IMAGE OF BISEXUALITY, THE BISEXUAL COMMUNITY/MOVEMENT WITHIN THE MEDIA;
- ADVOCATE TO ASSURE THAT ALL THOSE WHOSE LIVES ARE AFFECTED BY AIDS/HIV INFECTION WILL RECEIVE COMPASSIONATE, NON-JUDGEMENTAL RESPECT, CARE, SUPPORT, LOVE AND ASSISTANCE;
- FORM ALLIANCES WITH OTHER FEMINIST AND PROGRESSIVE GROUPS LOCALLY, NATIONALLY AND INTERNATIONALLY.

For info and registration write to: 1990 Conference, 584 Castro Street #422,
San Francisco, CA 94114.
Phone (415) 759-6226

CALL FOR WORKSHOPS

Conference Schedule:

Wednesday, June 20: Opening reception welcoming all those attending the Conference.

Thursday, Friday, and Saturday (June 21 - 23): On each day there will be a general session in the morning, workshops, and then a late afternoon closing assembly. During the lunch breaks there will be an open-mic. The scheduling of such events depends on your response to the call for performers/workshops, so please fill out this form and check the box on the reverse side if you are also interested in performing.

Sunday, June 24: We will march as a contingent in the Lesbian/Gay Freedom Day Parade!

FORMATS

WORKSHOPS are intended to be a forum for the exchange of ideas, information, and resources; to share experiences which will break down our isolation. A workshop is a place in which we challenge the misinformation that we have received about ourselves and others. The presenter serves as facilitator, keeping comments brief and then opening for discussion.

Sample workshops: support groups, a discussion group around a particular subject, a discussion group targeted for a particular audience such as married Bisexuals, people with AIDS/ARC and their lovers/friends, Bisexual people of color.

ISSUE PRESENTATIONS are intended to inform participants on a specific topic, with the presenter serving as a resource in her/his area of expertise. A formal, analytical or "how-to" presentation of 20 to 40 minutes would be followed by a period of questions and answers and/or demonstration.

Sample topics: AIDS awareness, safe-sex, starting a support group/newsletter/social network, cultural differences, feminist theory and Bisexuality, history of Bisexuality, Bisexuals in science fiction.

PANELS will be organized primarily by the Programming Committee. Three or four presenters with a common topic will be given 15-20 minutes each to present information before opening to questions and discussion. If you are interested in participating in a panel discussion, please submit your information on the reverse side of this form and the Programming Committee will notify you about your co-presenters. If you have already organized your co-presenters for a panel, please specify this on your form so that we can schedule appropriately.

CATEGORIES

During each time slot there will be three presentations running concurrently:

I. AIDS/Safe Sex workshops will be offered continuously so that everyone has a chance to attend. **All AIDS/Safe Sex workshop facilitators must have training or certification.**

II. General topics include any workshops, presentations, or panels which do not fit Categories I or III. Examples: monogamy, Bisexuality 101, or just about anything on the subject of Bisexuality!

III. Community/Movement Organizing includes all discussion on (A) strategies for building the Bisexual Community, and (B) specifics of building the **North American Bisexual Network (NABN)**. Such discussions are intended to give individuals and groups a time to share experiences and strategies which will make their activism more effective and give participants a time to explore different avenues of **BUILDING THE BISEXUAL COMMUNITY/THE BISEXUAL MOVEMENT**.

Sample topics: NABN meetings, bisexual strategies for the yearly lesbian/gay parades, pooling resources, the politics of visibility in the lesbian/gay communities and in the heterosexual community, racism in our movement/communities.

Please be as descriptive as possible. In order to organize program sessions we need a sense of how you plan to conduct your presentation. The formality of this application does not mean that the conference will be "formal". Rather, it is a tool with which to facilitate a smooth-running conference so that the organizers can have a good time too! Thanks. On that note, please TYPE OR PRINT CLEARLY the following:

1. TITLE OF PRESENTATION: _____
TOPIC: _____

2. FORMAT: Workshop Issues Presentation Possible Panelist

3. CATEGORY: SECTION I (AIDS awareness/Safe Sex) SECTION II (General)
 SECTION III (NABN/Movement Organizing)

4. INTENDED AUDIENCE: New to Bisexuality Out and about In & Out of Closet Organizers
 Professionals (therapists, health care workers, social workers, etc.)

5. NEEDS: Time needed (60, 90, 120 minutes): MINIMUM_____ MAXIMUM_____

Size of room needed: _____

Please check any equipment that you require:

Blackboard/ Chalk VCR/ TV Slide Projector (specify type: _____)
 Overhead Projector Screen Flipcharts Other _____

6. SERVICES FOR THE HEARING AND VISION IMPAIRED: All morning general sessions and late afternoon closing assemblies will be Sign Language interpreted. Braille, large type, and Sign interpretation of workshops will be provided upon request. In order to schedule interpreters for individual workshops and to provide materials in Braille or large type, all deaf or hearing-impaired and all blind or sight-impaired participants will be asked to register one month in advance. If any participants of your workshop require/request an interpreter, Braille, or large type, you must provide written material one month prior to the date of your presentation. **THERE WILL BE NO EXCEPTIONS MADE.** The name and address of the interpreter or transcriber will be provided to you so that you may send the material directly.

7. Please attach a separate sheet with a brief description/summary of your presentation.

***** PRESENTER'S INFORMATION *****

Name(s): _____

(Only the first presenter listed will receive information)

Mailing Address: _____ Phone: (H) (W)

Discretion needed? Yes No Yes No

Best time to reach me: _____

Day/Date I will be arriving: _____

Organizational Affiliation (if any): _____

PRESENTER'S SPECIAL NEEDS: Please describe any special needs such as wheelchair accessibility, Sign Language Interpretation, etc. _____

For AIDS Awareness/Safe Sex presentations: List training/qualifications: _____

— I am also interested in performing during the conference. Please send me the "Call for Performers"

**SEND THIS FORM ALONG WITH A SELF-ADDRESSED STAMPED ENVELOPE TO:
1990 CONFERENCE, 584 CASTRO ST. #422, SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94114. ALL
APPLICATIONS MUST BE RECEIVED BY FEB. 15, 1990. YOU WILL BE NOTIFIED OF YOUR
TIME SCHEDULE BY THE PLANNING COMMITTEE WITHIN 4-6 WEEKS AFTER THE DEADLINE.**

—PLEASE COPY THIS FORM & PASS IT ON!!—

April/May 1990

Vol. 8 No. 2

Bi Women

The Newsletter of the Boston Bisexual Women's Network

INSIDE

<i>BBWN News</i>	2
<i>Letters</i>	3
<i>Mythbusters</i>	6
<i>Arts & Ideas</i>	7
<i>National Conference Update</i>	8-10
<i>Calendar</i>	11-12

A New Kid in Town

Actually, I've been around for quite a while. My name is Kathleen Hepburn, and it looks like I'm the new editor of Bi Women. There's so much I want to say – about how this issue probably looks very different because it was done on a computer; and that Bi Women isn't going to become an icy-cold high-tech publication; and don't worry, there'll be more art decorating future issues; and that I have a zillion ideas I want to kick around with you about newsletter production and layout; but there just isn't time to go into all that, because this issue has to go to press. Most important, I guess, is that there is an opportunity for people to take on certain departments of the newsletter – the calendar, the arts page, news stories. Call me (424-7025) or BBWN (247-6683) if you're still into working on the newsletter. I want to get to know you.

Briefly, I'm a freelance graphic artist, been involved in the gay community for around 8 years, and am currently president of the Lesbian and Gay Freedom Trail Band. That's all for now.

- Kathy

One of Our Sisters — Anne Frank

Wednesday, 5 January, 1944

Dearest Kitty,

... After I came here, when I was just fourteen, I began to think about myself sooner than most girls, and to know that I am a 'person.' Sometimes when I lie in bed at night, I have a terrible desire to feel my breasts and to listen to the quiet rhythmic beat of my heart.

continued on page 7

The Politics of Marriage:

Small Losses and Greater Betrayals

In 1977, when I was 15, I went to get my hair cut at the hair salon in the neighborhood where I lived. The owner was a gay man. We argued about what should be done with my hair, which was growing out from a disastrous "cute" haircut acquired after a three-week wearing-down process while visiting relatives in West Virginia the summer before.

I wanted long, no-nonsense straight hair, following my genes and not fashion. He was determined to "doll" me up, saying I looked too serious. "Of course I look serious," I thought, "I'm a feminist." I stood my ground. "How do you expect the boys to care about how you look if you don't care about how you look?" he asked. "I don't care what they think," I said. "Oh, but you will. Someday you'll care a lot, when you want to find a husband." He seemed certain that mine was merely a case of late development.

At 15, I knew full well I was interested in girls as well as boys. But that wasn't what prompted my next statement. "I'm not going to get married," I said. The hairdresser smiled a superior adult smile and said, "Of course you will. You just think you won't now." "Of course I won't," I said hotly. "I'm a feminist. Feminists don't get married."

He started to laugh as he wrote up a bill. "Did you hear that?" he said to the women waiting their turn. "She's not going to get

continued on page 4

BBWN News

Thanks

This issue of the newsletter was made possible by the contributions of many people, but, unfortunately, I am so new to the scene that I don't know who to thank. I do know that Ann G., Robyn O. and Laura S. all provided me with material for this issue. My friend Jerry did much of the typing. And the many women who worked so hard in the past in order to keep the newsletter alive also made this issue possible. Many thanks to you, and to the new volunteers as well, who help the newsletter to carry on.

- Kathy

Bi Women needs editors:

News

Arts & Ideas

Calendar

Mythbusters

Other departments?

Call BIS-MOVE to volunteer

BBWN Coordinating Committee 1/22/90 meeting notes:

Questionnaire: Over 200 questionnaires have been returned. The results will be published in upcoming newsletters.

Address Change: The mailing address has changed to the Gay and Lesbian Service Center, 338 Newbury Street, Boston, MA 02115.

The Office: A significant portion of the rent at the Center is being paid with speaking engagement fees. The likelihood of keeping the office at the Center seems good.

Staffing of the Office: We had a meeting of staffers. Others have signed up. It is to be staffed every Monday night. We are looking for staffers to work one 2-hour shift about once a month.

Volunteer Coordination: People who signed up have been called for different volunteer positions. Robyn is coordinating and is looking for someone to help her. Staffers may be able to help.

Newsletter: Ann will not edit the next newsletter. We need a new editor or co-editors. Circulation is about 700-750. Newsletters are distributed to bookstores, but there is no formal distribution system. Lucy suggested mailing it to women's bookstores around the country.

We need people to take bulk newsletter mailings to the Post Office.

Treasurer's Report: We have over \$3000 in the BBWN account (\$3629 minus cost of the newsletter).

1990 National Conference: Forms were sent in the newsletter regarding performance and workshop proposals. There will be a bi community meeting on Sunday, April 29, from 2pm to 5pm at the Center to gather comments, issues, questions, etc. to be taken to the Conference by NABN representatives. The meeting will be highlighted in the April/May newsletter.

Pride: Deadline for speakers: Feb. 15. It was suggested that several people from BBWN should be nominated. Someone is needed to coordinate the brunch, do publicity, manage the table. People from the volunteer list should/will be called.

AIDS Questionnaire: The questionnaire will be stuffed along with the April/May newsletter.

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*Send this form along with
your check to:*

BBWN
338 Newbury Street
Boston, MA 02115

DEADLINE for the

May/June issue:

Friday, May 4 at noon.

This is a firm deadline. All submissions in writing, please, and include a name and phone number. Send articles, calendar entries, letters, art, news and views to:

Bi Women, BBWN
338 Newbury Street,
Boston, MA 02115

Letters

1/21/90

Dear Ann and all the wonderful people at Bi-Women,

Hi!! I miss you all! I'm still alive and well here in rural Higganum, CT.

I'm up to my ol' troublemaking again on the Bi scene. The mailing list continues to grow for the fledgling CT Bisexual Network, currently just a dream I share with my P.C.! But, as the list of names grows, I'm sure within the next few months there'll actually be real people to help get the Network off the ground.

I'm doing a BI 101 workshop at UConn/Stoors Awareness Week—Sunday, 2/11 at 7:30 in the Student Union. I may also go the NELGSA conference at BU and do a bi workshop there.

I have a tremendous favor to ask – in going through all my resource materials I noticed that I never received my June-July, 89' copy of Bi Women. If there are any back issues left, I'd greatly appreciate receiving one.

Am still unemployed and job hunting, but as soon as my 1st paycheck comes in, BBWN is going to receive a huge chunk of it!

Love and miss you all!

With great Bi Pride,

Alix Burack

The following letter was sent to Out/Look in response to an excellent and thought-provoking article by Jan Clausen entitled "An Interesting Condition":

Dear Editors,

My heartfelt thanks to Out/Look for publishing Jan Clausen's article in your winter issue. Jan Clausen addresses the too rarely discussed reality of many lesbian-identified women who find themselves at some point of their lives attracted to men. This is not, as some lesbians would prefer to believe, an uncommon occurrence. In fact, I hope that a future Out/Look survey will ask this question. The fact is that many lesbian-identified women have and do sleep with men. Some of us identify as

bisexual, and many others as lesbian. We are a homosexual community, but we are by no means homogeneous.

I hope that future issues of Out/Look will address, among other topics, bi-phobia in the lesbian/gay community, the politics of homogeneity (the pressures upon us to act according to certain "rules and regulations" in order to be accepted), and the experiences of individuals like Jan Clausen who commit the sin of falling in love with someone of the opposite sex but still insist on being proud members of "our" community. What exactly does "membership" in the queer community entail? Who makes up the rules and decides who belongs and who doesn't?

May I live to see the day when we are secure and courageous enough to accept and celebrate one another and all of our similarities and differences. We have long been told by the "straight" world that we are not acceptable, and many gay men and lesbians have long fought for the right to love whomever we choose, and to be accepted exactly as we are. Are we to deny others this basic human right?

Sincerely,

Robyn Ochs

Cambridge, MA

The following letter appeared in Gay Community News, February 18-24, 1990:

Dear GCN,

Much to my regret, for the first time in five years I will not be working on the steering committee for the Northampton Pride march. I would like you to know why.

As you know, last year the steering committee voted to include the word "bisexual" in the official title. (Bisexuals had been working on the march for years, without official acknowledgement.) A group of lesbians became quite upset about this, and I received several phone calls to that effect last year, some of which were quite verbally abusive.

This year, at the first steering committee

continued on next page

*
Remember our
new address:

Bi Women
338 Newbury
Street,
Boston, MA
02115



Typists
needed

!

for the
newsletter,
Sat. & Sun.,
May 5 & 6.
Call
BIS-MOVE
to volunteer.

Letters continued

The International Directory of Bisexual Organizations is available for \$2 at the BBWN Office, 338 Newbury Street, Boston

meeting, six women came (who had not served on the committee before), determined to get the word "bisexual" removed, saying that it made them "invisible." They stated that at the next meeting they would bring as many women as needed to accomplish this goal. At our next meeting, they brought forty women, who voted out the word "bisexual," and then stated that since the word bisexual was no longer in the title a bisexual could not be on the committee, so I could no longer serve. (Now I am the one who is "invisible".) They also stated that they certainly would never allow a bisexual to do publicity, which had been one of my duties, besides coordinating peacekeeping.

Last year, there were 3000 gay people and their friends marching in Northampton to celebrate our gayness and our diversity. Gay men, lesbians, bisexuals, drag queens, leather people, straight friends and allies, such as the wonderful Jean and Jim Genasci from PFLAG.

This year the steering committee consists of ten lesbians, claiming to speak for the entire community.

As a gay person, to be oppressed by the straight community is offensive. To be oppressed by members of our own community is outrageous, and much more offensive. Our community gets its strength from unity. Whoever oppresses one of us, oppresses all of us.

(. . .)

Sincerely,
Micki Siegel
West Hatfield, MA

[Ed. note: For a response to this letter, see GCN March 11-17. Sit down and take a deep breath before you read it...]

Friday, April 27

◆
Hippo 31st Birthday
to Sharon G. - Love,
The Gals.

TELEPHONE (617) 496-9923

BET MACARTHUR, ACSW LICSW
COUNSELING, PSYCHOTHERAPY
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14 PLEASANT ST.
CENTRAL SQUARE
CAMBRIDGE, MA 02139

Betrayals, from page 1

married because she's a feminist." They laughed as I walked the four blocks home to wash my hair and let it dry back into its natural state.

When I was 15, I knew that feminists valued women, that they didn't wear high heels, carry purses, mess with their hair or get married. Eleven years later I'm starting to think I had it right from the beginning.

For a long time marriage did not concern me. Like going to church, it was something of which I didn't approve, but as neither I nor anyone I knew did it, it didn't matter much. The only people I knew getting married were my cousins back in West Virginia, and I didn't expect anything else of them.

So I grew lax in my opinions of the heterosexual institution of state-sanctified marriage. Lesbians and gay men I knew invited me to "ceremonies of commitment" on the Society of Friends model. The idea of making a pledge of commitment to a relationship in front of family and friends followed by a blow-out party seemed a positive thing, whoever was doing it. Marriage became less disturbing in this guise.

But this past summer I've had to reconsider my views with a vengeance. June is the month for marriages, after Juno, the wife of Jupiter and goddess of marriage and fertility. But this entire summer has been filled with nuptials. Small losses and greater betrayals. The word nuptials itself means "becoming a wife." That is at the heart of my distress. In my complacency, I'd forgotten that for a woman in this culture, getting married still means becoming a wife.

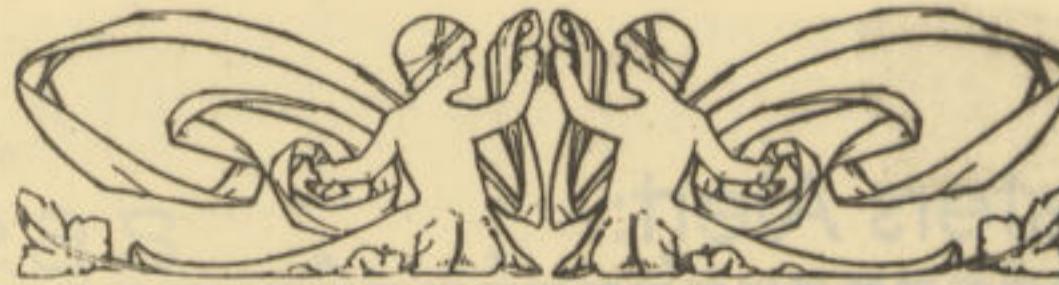
One woman who became a wife this summer was Janet*, the artistic partner of my best friend. They'd spent the better part of two months building a bower for her wedding and making small favors for their guests. Understand that this woman is almost thirty, runs her own business, owns her own home, and is an artist whose work explores the roles women have been forced to take through the ages.

* a pseudonym

continued on next page

Bi•Women

338 Newbury Street, Boston, MA 02115



Plymouth Area Support Group Forming

A new support group is forming for bi women in the Plymouth, Mass., area. It will be a small and friendly group. For more information, call Michelle at (508) 747-1454. Please use discretion! Call in reference to "a group".

Betrayals, from previous page

And after all this preparation, Janet excluded my friend from the ceremony; my friend still doesn't know why. Perhaps because Janet and her new husband chose to use the traditional Christian ceremony, "obeys" and all. Perhaps because my friend represented a consciousness Janet was trying to ignore during a process she described as "finally making me feel like a real woman." Perhaps my friend's clear independence, feminism, and non-heterosexual orientation were too threatening to the day-long fantasy Janet was creating for herself. For whatever reason, she wasn't invited.

A friend of mine, Sara*, also got married this summer. We've known each other for seven years. The wedding was in her homeland, Sweden, so her housemates held a reception for them when they got back. At the party I was talking to Sara when someone came up to get her new address. With a flustered look of embarrassment that I didn't understand at first, she looked away from me as she gave them her address and said, "And remember that I've changed my name." When they walked away she turned to me and said quickly in Swedish, "I didn't plan on changing my name at first, but it was really important to him, he couldn't understand why I'd want to keep my own." Just then her new husband walked up and put his arm around her. She said in English, "I was just telling Beth that I took your name." "Sure she did," he said. "She wouldn't have seemed like my wife if she didn't have my name." "Anyway," Sara added to the crowd of Americans that now circled them, "no one could ever spell or pronounce my name before."

BISEXUALITY
A National Newsletter
For info, send SASE to:
Gibbon Publications
P.O. Box 20917
Long Beach, CA 90801-3917

I walked away, feeling like I'd been kicked in the stomach, the wind knocked out of me. I went upstairs to sit for a moment and sort out what I was feeling: it was betrayal. I had known this woman from the first months she'd come to the U.S. At the time I'd just returned from living two years in Sweden. We spoke the same language, and understood what it was to live in both cultures. She had always clung fiercely to her identity, not wanting to become Americanized. Her clothes, the food in her kitchen, her name – all helped her maintain her sense of self.

And now suddenly she'd given it all up. It was important to him, she'd said. She'd chosen to share her life with someone for whom it was important that she be identifiable as his property at all times? Important that she give up her own identity and take on his, a last name with entirely foreign ethnic connotations?

I know how important last names are. I carry my father's family name. Although I never knew him, it means that people on committees ask me to represent the Jewish point of view. It means that traveling in Germany I was declined lodging because the innkeeper thought I was Jewish, and then the same thing happened in France because they thought I was German. I am neither. All for the five-letter configuration I bear as a surname. If I carried my mother's family name (Rigg) I would have encountered an entirely different set of reactions. But I would still have the same face and complexion. No one can tell me that last names don't matter.

So in becoming wives, these two women gave up their principles and identities, respectively. Three other women I know were married this summer. Who knows what they gave up?

... to be continued in the next issue of Bi Women.



Reprinted with permission from *North Bi Northwest* (Vol. 2, No. 6), a publication of the Seattle Bisexual Women's Network, P.O. Box 30645, Greenwood Sta., Seattle, WA 98103-0645. \$10/yr. sliding scale.

* a pseudonym

page 5

Mythbusters Alert:

Quote of the month:

"For reasons we cannot comprehend, some bisexual women seem to feel they cannot create their own community, but must attach themselves to the lesbian community."

Sarah Dreher and Lis Brook of Amherst, Mass., in a letter to Gay Community News, March 11-17, in response to a letter by Micki Siegal concerning the exclusion of Bisexuals from the name and the steering committee of the Northampton Lesbian/Gay (/Bisexual) Pride March.

(See Letters, page 3.)

Bi Women received this letter from The New York Area Bisexual Network, P.O. Box 479, Times Square Station, New York, NY 10108

20 February 1990

Help! We badly need your support, calls and letters in a situation that has just come up.

The Hetrick-Martin Institute for the Protection of Gay and Lesbian Youth recently announced a series of 'raps' to be conducted with Gay Men of African Descent. One of the topics is:

Bisexual Men—Fact or Fiction?

Some believe being sexually/emotionally attracted to men and women is real. Others believe it's a cover up for someone who isn't ready to admit to being gay. What do you think?

This was brought to our attention by a NYABN member who attends the Harvey Milk School/Hetrick-Martin Institute and was angry at being called a possible fiction. When he asked whether there would be any input from bisexual men he was asked in turn "Why?"

... As of this writing, we have only been able to discuss this personally with Judi Verdino, the Acting Executive Director of the Institute, and Steve Ashkenazy, Program Director of the School (Ms. Sneed & Ms. Joyce Hunter, Director of Social Services, have been out of town).

... Unfortunately for us, [Mr. Ashkenazy's] own perspective includes his statement that he believes the topic, "Fact or Fiction" to be a legitimate subject for debate. When asked what effect this would have on his bisexual students and clients (and staff!) he said he hoped he would attend to defend their point of view. When asked why they should have to defend the simple fact of their existence, he claimed that in his experience bisexuality was only a phase, part of the process of relinquishing heterosexuality, and that as such it was not real. When asked whether he believed that a supportive atmosphere would be more conducive to self-directed change of phase, he replied that young gays and lesbians should be encouraged to realize their 'true' sexuality as soon as possible. Throughout the interview he refused to acknowledge the possibility of bisexuality as either a permanent orientation or a phase to be supported in its time.

The Acting Director, Ms. Verdino, said she has not been aware of the rap topics, and was "sure" that this was meant to be a welcoming and positive experience for bisexuals. When asked whether she would feel welcomed by a topic such as:

Lesblans—Fact or Fiction?

Some people believe that women being sexually/emotionally attracted to other women is real. Others believe it's a mental illness which can be cured. What do you think?

she admitted that the flier was not "tactful."

So, HEEEEEEELLPI With enough response to this issue, we hope that GMAD and the Institute will re-issue the fliers, and make the rap a positive event in place of the hatchet job they are currently planning. Without considerable response, now that we've begun fussing, we will be seen as paper tigers, safe to ignore and hunt. For more information call BIPAC (Bisexual Political Action Committee of the NYABN), (212) 242-6815.

Please spread the word, Call as soon as possible, & write:

**Gay Men of African Descent (GMAD),
80 Varick Street, New York, NY 10013,
phone (718) 802-0162**

(We have no names at this time)

**Hetrick-Martin Institute, 401 West Street,
New York, NY 10014, phone (212) 633-8920
Attn:**

Judi Verdino, Acting Executive Director
Pamela Sneed, Drop-in Center Director
Joyce Hunter, Director of Social Services
Steve Ashkenazy, Program Director/The
Harvey Milk School

Bi all means, keep in touch! Let us know what happens! And Thanks!

Sincerely,

Katherine Kurzus

Co-Editor NYABN Newsletter & Member
NYABN Steering Committee

NY Area ECBN Delegate

Arts & ideas . . .

Ann Frank continued from page 1

I already had these kinds of feelings subconsciously before I came here, because I remember once when I slept with a girlfriend I had a strong desire to kiss her, and that I did so. I couldn't help but being terribly inquisitive over her body, for she had always kept it hidden from me. I asked her whether, as proof of our friendship, we should feel one another's breasts, but she refused. I go into ecstasies every time I see the naked figure of a woman, such as Venus, for example. It strikes me as so wonderful and exquisite that I have difficulty in stopping the tears rolling down my cheeks.

If only I had a girlfriend!

Yours, Anne.

Sunday, 27 February, 1944

Dearest Kitty,

From early in the morning till late at night, I really do hardly anything else but think of Peter. I sleep with his image before my eyes, dream about him and he is still looking at me when I am awake . . .

But how and when will we finally reach each other? I don't know how long my common sense will keep this longing under control.

Yours, Anne.

From: *Revelations, Diaries of Women*, edited by Mary Jane Moffat and Charlotte Painter, Vintage Books, 1974.

Eventworks at Mass. College of Art

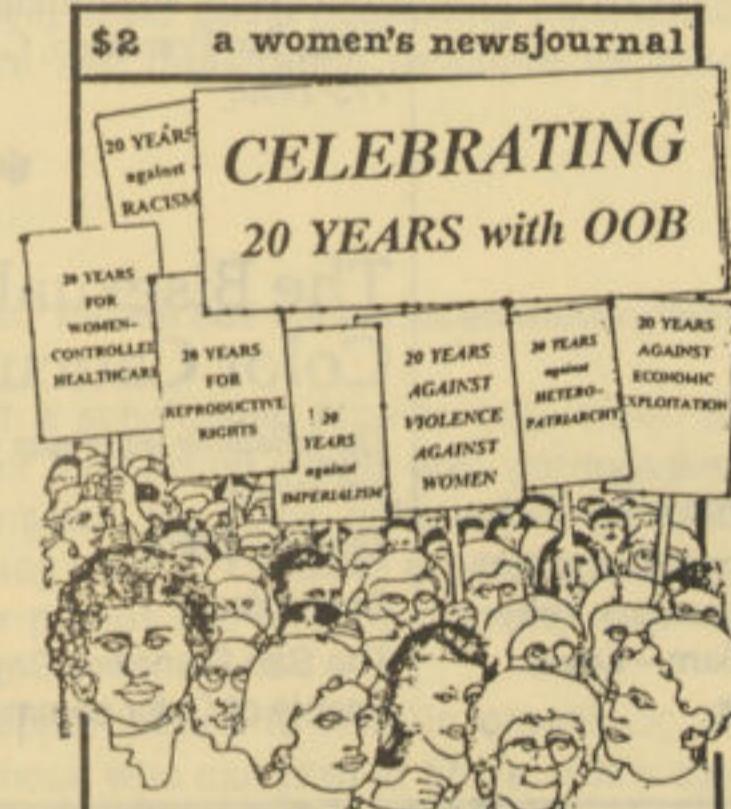
For the fourteenth year, Eventworks will be holding its annual festival of performance art at Mass. College of Art. The artists this year include a number of lesbians and women of color. Of special interest are *Dilema I*, *Burundanga Boricua*, a multi-media presentation by Poli Marischal, a Puerto Rican filmmaker (April 18, 7:30pm, Longwood Theatre, 364 Brookline Ave., Boston); and *World Without End*, a new solo piece by Holly Hughes, a lesbian

playright and performer (April 20, 8pm, also at the Longwood Theatre). Hughes' works involve the exploration of personal boundaries, the limits of intolerance, and ethics. All performances are wheelchair accessible. For more information on these and other performances in the festival, call Eventworks at 731-2040. The festival is presented by the Studio for Interrelated Media, and runs April 1 through April 28.

Instant Coffee House

The Instant Coffee House is a showcase for local performers (open mike, 15 minutes per performance), and is part of the Eventworks festival. The first Instant Coffee House will be on April 12 at the Middle East Café in Cambridge, the second on April 26 at T.T. the Bear's, also in Cambridge. The second will be a benefit for the Good Times Gallery, a really cool pro-women place in the Combat Zone.

off our backs



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338 Newbury Street
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THE 1990 BISEXUAL CONFERENCE

ECBN Offers Scholarship Fund

The East Coast Bisexual Network is committed to making bisexual activism accessible and represented by everyone, and have established a small fund to assist people attending the 1990 Bisexual Conference in San Francisco June 20-24. First priority will be given to low income bisexual people of color. Other low income people are also invited to apply. If you are a resident of an eastern state and you would require a scholarship in order to attend the conference, please contact: Lorraine Hutchins, 6104 3rd St., NW, Washington, DC 20011, (202) 882-4384 (home w/tape machine). All calls returned with discretion. For more information about the 1990 Bisexual Conference and/or about the 1990 Bisexual People of Color Caucus, which will be meeting at the conference, write BiPol, 584 Castro Street #442, San Francisco, CA 94114, or call (415) 775-1990.



The Bisexual People of Color Caucus

The following letter was received by Bi Women last month.

January 1990

Dear Friend,

The San Francisco Bay Area Bisexual People of Color community is organizing a

Saturday, April 14
Happy, Happy 39th Anniversary Toby and Sam – Love, Laura

CATHY McDERMOTT, ACSW, LICSW

PSYCHOTHERAPIST

SUITE 83
875 MASS AVE
CAMBRIDGE, MA

497-0539

1990 People of Color Caucus for the National Bisexual Conference being held in San Francisco, June 20-24, 1990.

The 1990 National Bisexual Conference is the place for us to put forth our issues. We are forming a caucus to build multi-cultural alliances that will help us organize our agenda for the 1990's. Our visibility will support bisexual people of color who are coming out of the lesbian/gay and heterosexual closets. The strength and challenge of our emerging bisexual community/movement is in our diversity.

Many of us have come up through the ranks of different liberation movements. The Conference is an opportunity for us to share the lessons and skills we have learned and to apply them. We don't have to begin at zero. Please contact us. Let us know what is going on with you and/or your local community/movement. What do you want to see at the Conference?

If you are a person of color or are interested in issues that affect bisexual people of color, please contact us. Give a workshop. Perform. Play. Caucus. Join us. Celebrate!

The Bisexual People of Color Caucus
1990 National Bisexual Conference POCC
584 Castro Street, #442
San Francisco, CA 94114
(415) 775-1990



Bi Community Meeting

There will be an East Coast Bisexual Network Bi Community Meeting about the June conference on Sunday, April 28, 2pm-5pm at the Boston Gay and Lesbian Service Center, 338 Newbury Street, Boston, MA.

See the calendar listing for details on the discussion topics.

If you can't make it to the conference, this meeting is your way to voice opinions and have a representation at the conference. If you cannot make this meeting, write to ECBN with your comments.

1990 NATIONAL BISEXUAL CONFERENCE

January, 1990

Dear Friends in the Bisexual Community:

Time is moving fast and here at "Conference Headquarters" for the first-ever National Bisexual Conference, the energy is building towards what promises to be an inspiring, groundbreaking event in bisexual history. We are excited and we hope you are too! Kicking off the new decade with the Conference symbolizes what the nineties will bring to our emerging community and movement: positive visibility for bisexuals in both the lesbian/gay communities and society at large. We are women and men working together for change, and WE ARE EVERYWHERE!

Enclosed you will find a registration brochure and information. We ask that you reproduce this information for the members of your group so that we can reach as many people as possible.

So far, at least seven foreign countries as well as many regions of the United States will be represented. The Conference will provide opportunities to experience the rich diversity of our community, to get to know who we are, and to end the isolation that we face in our daily lives. It will provide a time to educate, advocate, agitate, and most of all CELEBRATE!

We want to encourage bisexuals to come out and organize their local community/movement, no matter how small. To this end, one section of the Conference will be devoted to community organizing. We welcome you to share your ideas on this subject, either by presenting a how-to workshop or by joining us in the National Bisexual Network caucus which will take place at the Conference.

Topping off our fabulous weekend will be the Lesbian/Gay Freedom Day Parade, a day for us to celebrate our Bi Pride and march as the biggest bisexual contingent ever in San Francisco history. This is an exciting event for contingents and bi-standers alike. Because the Parade day is such a huge celebration in San Francisco, we encourage you to plan to leave Monday morning rather than Sunday, both so that you can enjoy the whole day and so that the crowds and excitement do not delay your transportation.

As explained in the brochure, registration fees are on a sliding-scale basis depending on financial abilities. Reduced rates are given for early registration. Please see registration brochure for other special needs request deadlines.

The 1990 National Bisexual Conference needs your help.

• Publicity: You can help spread the word about the Conference. Please see the enclosed media packet for more information.

• Fundraising: Support your local community. You can start a scholarship fund to help make the Conference affordable to people in your area. Some suggestions for fundraising events are: get-togethers in people's homes (brunches, dinners, video nights); sales (garage sales, tag sales, bake sales); or dance parties. For those within driving distance of San Francisco, you may want to consider organizing vans or buses to help defray transportation costs. Seattle and Vancouver groups are already planning to rent a Green Tortoise bus for the trip.

• Volunteer! If you live in the Bay Area, there are many opportunities to help in organizing the Conference. If you are interested, please give us a call. And, for those who can plan to arrive a few days before the Conference, there will be many volunteer opportunities. So let us know!

• Plan now! We are soliciting participation of workshop facilitators, artists, and performers for the Conference. If you are interested but have questions or need technical assistance, call or write as soon as possible so that we can help you meet the submission deadlines. We want to hear from you!

Come to San Francisco and celebrate the diversity and visibility of the bisexual community!

Sincerely,

Lani Kaahumanu

for the Steering Committee, 1990 National Bisexual Conference

January, 1990

Naomi Tucker

David Lourea

1990 NATIONAL BISEXUAL CONFERENCE

GENERAL INFORMATION

Conference Schedule:

Wednesday, June 20: Opening reception welcoming all those attending the Conference.

Thursday, Friday, and Saturday (June 21 - 23): On each day there will be a general session in the morning, followed by workshops, and then a late afternoon closing assembly. During the lunch breaks there will be an open mike. The scheduling of such events depends on your response to the call for performers/workshops, so please fill out those forms if you are interested in presenting a workshop or performance piece.

Sunday, June 24: We will march as a contingent in the Lesbian/Gay Freedom Day Parade! March with us or be a Bi-stander of this magnificent event.

CATEGORIES OF PRESENTATIONS

During each time slot there will be three presentations running concurrently:

i. AIDS/Safe Sex workshops will be offered continuously so that everyone has a chance to attend. **All AIDS/Safe Sex workshop facilitators must have training or certification.**

II. General topics include any workshops, presentations, or panels which do not fit Categories I or III. Examples: monogamy, bisexuality 101, or just about anything on the subject of bisexuality!

III. Community/Movement Organizing includes all discussion on (A) strategies for building the bisexual Community, and (B) specifics of building the National Bisexual Network (NBN). Such discussions are intended to give individuals and groups a time to share experiences and strategies which will make their activism more effective and give participants a time to explore different avenues of BUILDING THE BISEXUAL COMMUNITY/THE BISEXUAL MOVEMENT.

Sample topics: NBN meetings, bisexual strategies for the yearly lesbian/gay parades, pooling resources, the politics of visibility in the lesbian/gay communities and in the heterosexual community, racism in our movement/communities, how to start a Bi-social group.

FORMATS OF PRESENTATIONS

WORKSHOPS are intended to be a forum for the exchange of ideas, information, and resources; to share experiences which will break down our isolation. A workshop is a place in which we challenge the misinformation that we have received about ourselves and others. The presenter serves as facilitator, keeping comments brief and then opening for discussion.

Sample workshops: support groups, a discussion group around a particular subject, a discussion group targeted for a particular audience such as married bisexuals, people with AIDS/ARC and their lovers/ friends, bisexual people of color.

ISSUE PRESENTATIONS are intended to inform participants on a specific topic, with the presenter serving as a resource in her/his area of expertise. A formal, analytical or "how-to" presentation of 20 to 40 minutes would be followed by a period of questions and answers and/or demonstration.

Sample topics: AIDS awareness, safe-sex, starting a support group/newsletter/social network, cultural differences, feminist theory and bisexuality, history of bisexuality, bisexuals in science fiction.

PANELS will be organized primarily by the Programming Committee. Three or four presenters with a common topic will be given 15-20 minutes each to present information before opening to questions and discussion. If you are interested in participating in a panel discussion, please submit your information on the Call for Workshops and the Programming Committee will notify you about your co-presenters. If you have already organized your co-presenters for a panel, please specify this on your form so that we can schedule appropriately.

BiPOL
EDUCATE ▼ ADVOCATE ▼ AGITATE

584 CASTRO STREET #422 ▼ SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94114
415 775-1990

CALENDAR

(continued)

*Ongoing
Events:*



Sundays:

Alateen Group open to bisexual, lesbian and gay youth 22 and under, afflicted by alcoholism in a family member or a close friend. 6pm at the Boston Gay & Lesbian Service Center at 338 Newbury St., in room 202K.



Tuesdays:

Bisexual Women's Rap Group. 7:30pm-10pm at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant Street, Central Square, Cambridge, MA. All women welcome. Call (617) 354-6658 for topics or more info.



Wednesdays:

Bisexual Children of Alcoholics. 7:30pm. An Al-Anon meeting for bisexual children of alcoholics. Mass. General Hospital, lower amphitheater (next to the emergency room entrance), Boston, MA. Call Marge at (617) 259-1559 for more info.



May 5 ♦ Saturday

Northampton (Mass.) Lesbian and Gay Pride Parade. 11am.

May 12 ♦ Saturday

NEGAL Contra & Square Dance, Boston, MA (see 4/28 listing).

May 13 ♦ Sunday

Mother's Day

May 14 ♦ Monday

BBWN Coordinating Committee meeting. Discussion to cover June 9th Pride Brunch and March, BBWN Bi-laws, formation of a National Bi Network, etc. 7pm-9pm at the Gay and Lesbian Service Center, 338 Newbury Street, Boston, MA.

May 18 ♦ Friday

John Gorka with Ann Reed. 7:30pm in Paine Hall, Harvard Univ., Cambridge, MA. Call (617) 661-1252 for more info.

NEGAL Contra & Square Dance, Providence, RI (see 4/28 listing).

May 18-20 ♦ Friday-Sunday

3rd Annual Womongathering, Pennsylvania. A festival of womyn's spirituality at scenic private camp. For more info: RR5, Box 185, Franklinville, NJ 08322, (609) 694-2037.

May 21 ♦ Monday

Volunteer Night to stuff the June/July issue. 6pm-10pm. Lesbian and Gay Service Center, 338 Newbury Street, Boston, MA.

May 24-28 ♦ Thursday-Monday

Campfest. "The Comfortable Womyn's Music Festival." Pennsylvania. Women only. Performers include Stafford Sisters, Rude Girls, Circus of a Queer Nature, Monicas Grant & more. For more info: RR5, Box 185, Franklinville, NJ 08322, (609) 694-2037.

May 26 ♦ Saturday

NEGAL Contra & Square Dance, Boston, MA (see 4/28 listing).

June 1 ♦ Friday

NEGAL Contra & Square Dance, Providence, RI (see 4/28 listing).

June 2 ♦ Saturday

NEGAL Contra & Square Dance, Hartford, CT (see 4/28 listing).
Portland, Maine, Pride Parade

June 9 ♦ Saturday

Bisexual Brunch Before the March, 9am-11am, Community Church of Boston, 565 Boylston St., Boston, MA. Sponsored by BBWN. Call BIS-MOVE for more info.

Boston Gay Pride March

Gay Pride Day Dance Celebration!!!
Caller: Cindy Green (see 4/28 listing).

June 15 ♦ Friday

NEGAL Contra & Square Dance, Providence, RI (see 4/28 listing).

June 16 ♦ Saturday

Providence, RI, Pride Parade

June 20-24 ♦ Wednesday-Sunday

1990 National Bisexual Conference, San Francisco, CA. Sponsored by BiPol in San Francisco. For information write to BiPol, 584 Castro St., Box 422, San Francisco, CA 94114. Several Boston Bis are planning to attend.

June 23 ♦ Saturday

NEGAL Contra & Square Dance, Boston, MA (see 4/28 listing).

Hartford, Conn., Pride Parade

June 24 ♦ Sunday

New York City Pride Parade

July 15-17 ♦ Sunday-Tuesday

Feminist Women's Writing Workshop's 15th Annual Conference. New York Finger Lakes Region. For brochure send SASE to Mary Gilliland, FWWW, PO Box 6583, Ithaca, NY 14851.

June/July 1990

Vol. 8 No. 3

SPECIAL
PRIDE
ISSUE

Bi Women

The Newsletter of the Boston Bisexual Women's Network

INSIDE

<i>BBWN News</i>	2
<i>Letters</i>	3
<i>Mythbusters</i>	5
<i>Arts & Ideas</i>	10
<i>Bi the Way</i>	11
<i>Calendar</i>	12

*

Dearest Readers:

Get out your bi-focals. This issue is packed with letters, essays, poetry — the voices of our community.

I feel privileged to have been able to read every one of the numerous letters recently sent to us on so many subjects, most notably on the Northampton Pride March. I have tried to edit them carefully in order to make room for substantial excerpts of each one.

Such a short time ago there were no resources on bisexuality — what it is, what it means. But by writing, sharing our thoughts, we create resources for others, and strengthen ourselves and our community. And, in the process, we are making history.

— Kathy

The Politics of Marriage:

Small Losses and Greater Betrayals

by Beth Reba Weise

(continued from previous issue)

I met a woman at a party recently who started out by telling everyone, "I'm married, and I've taken my husband's name." I couldn't figure out why she was telling me until someone told me that she'd been a lesbian for the last seven years, and had gotten so much flack about having "gone straight" that she thought she should get it out in the open from the beginning.

I didn't have any problems with her having chosen a male partner, but later when we were alone in the kitchen I asked her why she'd decided to marry. She said she'd unexpectedly fallen in love with a man when her last relationship with a woman ended. "Yes, but why get married?" I asked. "You'd lived with female lovers before without being married." She answered, "I guess it was never a possibility when I was with women, so I didn't think of it. But then, with him, suddenly it was possible, and it was what I'd always expected to do, so I did it."

"But then why take his name?" I couldn't disguise my horror. The question didn't even bother her. "It never was my name, it was just my father's. If I'm going to have a man's name, I might as well have his instead of my father's. And when we have children it will be easier."

Again, I felt the breath knocked out of me by the tidal force of such thinking. Her belief that a true relationship, i.e., a permanent, adult, child-bearing one, is marriage. Giving up her birth name to take someone else's. Mouthing words that can't have meant anything, or she wouldn't have been able to say them: "My father's name, not mine." If you don't respect a man's name, then why in the name of all that's sacred take another man's name? And if your name has no meaning to you because it is a man's name, why force the same fate on your children?

Betrayals continued on page 9

Northampton

The story so far...

Last issue we published a letter written to Gay Community News from Micki Siegel regarding this year's Northampton (Mass.) Pride Committee's exclusion of bisexuals from their Steering Committee and their march title. Since then, BiWomen has received numerous letters, addressed to various organizations. This issue contains excerpts from most letters, as well as excerpts from the Northampton march organizers' statement and from a particularly biphobic letter that was sent to GCN in response to Micki Siegel.

The march itself went off as planned on May 5th. Reportedly, the Valley Bi Network's idea to distribute fuchsia-colored armbands for bi-pride supporters was somewhat undermined by a (possibly) biphobic group who passed out armbands of the same color and announced that fuchsia armbands represented a protest against violence against women. The political tension and nastiness soured the march for many participants, although the net result of this whole mess will be very positive, judging by the outpouring of support from the greater gay community.

And now, the letters.

An open letter to the lesbian, bisexual and gay communities, published in the Valley Bi Network Newsletter:

... We feel strongly that a bisexual community that is visible and active in the struggle against heterosexist oppression is critical to the success of the movement as a whole. However, its unique political potential is not well-recognized on either side of this debate.

... In our culture, heterosexuality is aggressively — even violently — promoted and enforced. Feminism and the gay and lesbian movements have exposed it as an institution compelling separate and unequal gender roles

Northampton continued on page 5

BBWN News

Honor Roll

◆
Michelle H.
Naomi H.
Vera P.
Sue W.
Margery B.
Robyn O.
Kathleen H.
Ann G.
Lynne L.
Charnan B.
Sharon G.
Slick
Laura S.
Pam L.
Judy L.
Judy W.

BiWomen is published bi-monthly, of course.

Editor:
Kathleen Hepburn

Typists:
Ingrid Sell, Jerry Leake

BiWomen needs editors:

News

Arts & Ideas

Calendar

Mythbusters

Other departments?

Call BIS-MOVE to volunteer

On April 29, 1990, an East Coast Bisexual Network bi community meeting was held to discuss the formation of a National Bisexual Network. The discussion was structured around a National Bi Network proposal from the San Francisco working group for the 1990 Bi Conference. It was a very productive meeting — too productive, if fact, to print the five pages of meeting notes here. However, the views expressed at the meeting will be carried to the National Conference and presented by representatives from the Boston bisexual networks.

Many thanks to those who contributed to the meeting.

Below are some brief notes from the BBWN Coordinating Committee meeting held on May 14, 1990.

1. **Volunteers needed for Center:** Importance of contributing to Center and being visible as bis. Place notice in BBWN newsletter.
2. **Treasurer's report:** About \$3000 in bank.
3. **Pride:** Charnan is coordinating, Liz doing publicity. Room is reserved.
4. **Newsletter:** Looks great. Next printing: 1300 (extras for conference, Michigan Women's Festival, & Pride).
5. **Conference:** (See ECBN story above.) Volunteers needed to be reporters at the event.
6. **Survey:** Robyn, Sharon & Heidi will tabulate & interpret the 250± responses. Hope to present it at conference & get it published. Target deadline September. Laura S. to help w/data entry.
7. **Staffing office:** Place notice in newsletter.
8. **Speaking engagements scheduled:** MIT, Mt. Holyoke, Tufts, Wesleyan.

Advertise in BiWomen!

For only \$10 per issue, your message will reach over 700 subscribers. Save \$5 and advertise in three issues for only \$25.

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BBWN c/o LGSC
338 Newbury Street
Boston, MA 02115
Attn: Newsletter

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 Near Goddess: \$50
 Matron Saint: \$100

Send this form along with your check to:

BBWN c/o LGSC
338 Newbury Street
Boston, MA 02115

 **DEADLINE** for the Aug./Sept. issue:
Friday, July 13 at noon.

This is a firm deadline. All submissions in writing, please, and include a name and phone number. Send articles, calendar entries, letters, art, news and views to:

BiWomen, BBWN
338 Newbury Street
Boston, MA 02115

Letters

Dear BBWN:

I am writing on behalf of the Bisexual Women's Voice. We are a newly formed group based in Boulder, Colorado. Our first meeting was in June 1989. We started through the initiative and bravery of one Boulder woman named Melonie. The Colorado lesbian community is very biphobic. The Bisexual Women's Voice wishes to rid the Colorado lesbian community of this phobia. Despite the fact that we have been in existence for less than one year, we have participated in several Gay, Lesbian and Women related activities in the Boulder area (mainly in association with many University of Colorado student groups) [including] National Coming Out Day . . . for International Women's Week, [we] directed a workshop called "Hetero/Homo/Bi: In Search for Sexual Diversity." We can already see the impact we have made in the Boulder community.

The Bisexual Women's Voice has twelve active members. We welcome new members, and are in an active pursuit of new members through advertising in many Boulder area Gay and Lesbian community information sources.

The BWV meets Biweekly. . . . we hold open and specific topic discussion groups, have hot tub parties and nights out in the city. We do limit our discussion groups to women only. All other group activities are open to the participation of male partners.

We are hoping to see the development of a men's group in the Boulder-Denver area in the coming months.

We were made aware of BiWomen through one of our members. We enjoy the letter very much. Keep up the great work in helping to develop the strength and visibility of our Bisexual community.

Sincerely,

S. Ashford, Bisexual Women's Voice
c/o Gays, Lesbians & Friends in Boulder
UMC 28, University of Colorado
Boulder, CO 80309 Tel. (303) 492-8567

Typists needed!
for the newsletter,
Sat. & Sun.,
July 14-15.
Call
BIS-MOVE
to volunteer.

Hi —

Congratulations and appreciation for taking on editing BiWomen! Your first issue looks great!

Being resolutely opposed to marriage myself (and similarly certain from even before I was 15 that feminists don't — or shouldn't), I thought "Small Losses and Greater Betrayals" was great.

I'm sure other people will mention that you forgot the author's name — easily corrected in the next installment, of course.

Anyway, hooray for you!

David Chapman

Dear Kathy,

Congratulations on your first issue of BiWomen! The new format is GORGEOUS, and the April-May issue is one of the best I've ever seen content-wise. For a while, I've had some stuff to send to BBWN, and that beautiful newsletter has inspired me.

- I'm writing to the authors of *Intimate Matters: A History of Sexuality in America* because bisexuality is not in the index of their book! This might seem a minor complaint, but it really ticked me off. I've found mention of bisexuality in the text, but we're invisible to the person who is specifically looking for historical info on bisexuality. If anyone else is interested in writing, I've written to one of the co-authors at the following address: Estelle B. Freedman, Dept. of History, Stanford University, Stanford, CA. It's a Book-of-the-Month Club selection, so it must be a fairly popular book.

- A quote: "I can't understand why more people aren't bisexual. It would double your chances for a date on Saturday night." — Woody Allen. This quote is probably well-known to everyone but me.

- Ever read the entry on bisexuality in The Joy of Sex? I'll give you a hint about how bad it is: it's in the section on "problems."

- A fun interview with Sandra Bernhard [*to be included in a future issue of BiWomen. — Ed.*]

- I've written to the relevant organizations concerning the "Bisexual Men — Fact or Fiction" event. [*see page 4, col. 2*]

Good luck on your tenure as editor. I edit a biweekly newsletter (on linguistics), so I know your job is both fun and trying. Please pass on my gratitude to the former editors and the other people working on BiWomen. While reading of your activities makes me miss the East terribly, it does warm my heart to know you people care enough about our bi community to keep this newsletter going.

Yours in the prairie,

M. Lynne Murphy
Champaign, Ill.

Dear BBWN:

I cannot believe how glad I am to find such a group exists. Even though I am miles away from it all, you are always only a phone call

Letters continued on next page

1990 Bisexual Conference
June 20-24
San Francisco
Sponsored by BiPOL
(415) 775-1990



"I took a deep breath and listened to the old brag of my heart. I am, I am, I am."

— Sylvia Plath
(1932-1963)
American Poet

Staffers are needed for the Lesbian and Gay Service Center. If you are interested, call Michael Goldrosen, the Center's manager, at 247-2927.

Letters, from previous page

away. Your newsletter, BiWomen, is important to all who receive it.

I did not realize that the new decade would bring me in touch with my denied self. I feel good about myself for the first time in years. I'm out, and I am learning how to deal with many different feelings and issues. Most importantly I am not alone. It is OK to feel this way.

I look forward to volunteer nights. One night a month when I can pay back a fraction of what I receive. I hope that over time I will be able to meet and know more members of BBWN

Warmest Wishes,

groups" and concentrate our educational efforts towards teaching people to avoid "risky behaviors."

As your series flushed out, the true cause of Brazil's problems stems from the same source as it does here in the U.S., namely the lack of a unified and efficient governmental and societal campaign to fight the pandemic. We must begin to place the blame where it truly lies.

Sincerely,

Warren J. Blumenfield
Co-Chair
Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation



Dear BBWN,

Enclosed is a copy fo the letter I sent to Hetrick-Martin Institute as my contribution to the effort to get Bi reality validated in the gay community, as requested by "HEEEEEELLLLLLPPPPPPP!" in the last newsletter. I felt pissed when I read about this one more example to dilute our experience and hope that many other "tigers" will rise to this effort and give us women power (tigress power?) so that we will be neither "ignored nor hunted" — I liked that phrase.

Keep up the good work, Bi-women. Enclosed is my financial contribution towards my subscription. Times are getting rougher and the hair-splitters are out there with their fine tooth combs. Let's stick together and make it harder for "Divide and Conquer" — the old colonialist trick, to have any effect on the BI-NATION!!!

In sisterhood,

Anne R. Nwokoye
Amherst, MA

The following are excerpts from letters sent to the Hetrick-Martin Institute. (See Mythbusters Alert, page 6, BiWomen April/May 1990 issue.)

"... I am not fiction . . . I am fact and the sooner other gays and hets recognize me and other bi's as a genuine group, the sooner you'll be able to give us our proper respect and not perpetuate myths that invalidate who we are. We are just people who are able to enjoy intimate relationships with both men and women — that's all. So big deal. Let's just enjoy life."

— Anne Nwokoye



"... Sometimes it amazes me how little tolerance the gay community has for bisexuals. Other times, I see this intolerance as an example of the corruption of empowerment. It seems that in order to feel 'empowered,' some people feel the need to oppress. Is this the kind of empowerment you want for the gay community? For yourself?"

— M. Lynne Murphy



Excerpts from the statement issued by the Northampton Pride Committee:

"... The compromise structure adopted is as follows: All lesbians, gay men, bisexuals and other allies are welcomed and encouraged to participate on the work committees for the march. These committees do the bulk of the work and decision making. Decisions deemed critical to the political orientation of the event — are finalized by the steering committee. The steering committee is comprised of two lesbian or gay male representatives from each work committee.

"... We recognize the oppression of bisexual people in our society and acknowledge the significant overlap in our struggle against heterosexism and homophobia. Our choice to decline an invitation to change the name of our annual march is a statement of political affiliation — not a personal rejection of bisexual people or an inability to understand the struggles which they face in our society.

"Ours is not a single, 'melting-pot' community. Some chose to identify as a 'sexual minority community.' Many of us on the 1990 march committee do not. We acknowledge our roots in the Lesbian and Gay Liberation Movement — which strives to expand the meaning of our love and our lives beyond the sexual minority status which



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Northampton, from page 1

and female dependence on and deference to men. The visibility of lesbians and gay men challenges the patriarchal myth that heterosexual desire and "masculine" and "feminine" character traits are biologically based and therefore inescapable.

Lesbians play a central role in the struggle for women's liberation, and need to remain a distinct and visible segment of this movement. Lesbian identity and community challenge the patriarchal notion that women "need" men, and create a space in which women can focus exclusively on women. We will not be able to say that any woman has freely chosen to be with a man until all women are free to not be with men. Flourishing lesbian communities are necessary so that women are able to make this choice.

Still, we believe that bisexuality is equally important in attacking heterosexism and male dominance. The concept of gender is as much a social construct as the institution of heterosexuality, and it is a central element in the system of women's oppression. Bisexuality works to subvert the gender system and everything it upholds because it is not based on gender. In addition, bisexual identity and struggle lend themselves in a special way to exploring the possibility that women and men are "more alike than different," and that variations in human character bear no intrinsic connection to biological sex.

Bisexuality subverts gender; bisexual liberation also depends on the subversion of gender categories. The same can be said of lesbian and gay liberation. As the concept that female and male human natures are fundamentally different and unequal fades from cultural consciousness, persecution of lesbians (as "mannish" women) and gay men (as "effeminate" males) will decline accordingly. Women will no longer be expected to be pleasing to men; men no longer will need to dominate women or other men in order to feel worthwhile. Along with their common resistance to compulsory heterosexuality, it is in this way that we see the struggles of lesbians, bisexuals and gay men as being inextricably linked — to one another and to the struggle for women's liberation.

We believe that bisexual women need to have an understanding of the importance of lesbian community and identity in their own struggle. But it is also important for lesbians to understand that women who choose to call

themselves bisexual don't necessarily do so out of a lack of commitment to women or to the struggle against heterosexism. It could simply be that that is what they are. Taking on an identity that doesn't in all honesty fit because it's supposed to be "more radical" is not a good place to move from — personally or politically. And as we have said, the existence of bisexuality can be understood as a radical challenge to the order of male dominance.

Furthermore, the entire question of sexual identity is not a simple one. Many women call themselves bisexual because they feel that label is most accurate for them, even though they have not been involved with a man for some time and don't intend to be. Other women whose history may be read by some as "bisexual" feel that "lesbian" better describes their affiliation. The fact that the writers of this letter identify one as bisexual and one as lesbian, even though we have very similar relationship histories and political views reflects how complex this is. Similar problems arise in attempting to define the "community," the march, and the movement it is supposed to represent, since bisexuals often (though not always) share a community with lesbians and gay men. Thus, making the march steering committee open only to lesbians and gay men is not the simple proposal that it seems.

While we believe bisexuality to be a significant challenge to the system of gender, we do not think that bisexuals are "better" or "more advanced" than other people because they "love everyone" — as some have been known to say. In fact, bisexuals in heterosexual relationships have to face sexism more than lesbians and gay men do in their relationships. And as with any social class, the politicization of bisexuals is uneven. While an identity (lesbian, bisexual, gay) may inherently subvert the status quo, we have all been socialized under patriarchy and anyone can act in ways that support oppressive systems. But a visible, radical bisexual movement, working in conscious alliance with lesbians and gay men, can only encourage more bisexuals to come out and join our common struggle.

In fact, we have noticed that the number of out bisexuals is indeed growing. This is undoubtedly because of a breakdown of traditional male-female roles and sexual norms — mainly the result of feminism and the lesbian and gay liberation movement(s). The issue of bisexuals' place in this struggle will continue to

Mythbusters continued on next page

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(from previous page)

the mainstream assign to us. The Lesbian and Gay Liberation Movement confronts heterosexism and homophobia in our society and unifies our struggles and our healing within many diverse organizations and programs. At this march, we honor the roots of our strength.

"We encourage those of you who support the Lesbian and Gay Liberation Movement and the 1990 march to work with us at this time."



Excerpts from a letter to Gay Community News from Sarah Dreher and Lis Brook of Amherst, Mass. (responding to Micki Siegel's letter to GCN, which we published in last issue's BiWomen):

"... We were among the six lesbians who came to the first meeting of the Steering Committee. We did so because we were concerned about the focus the march has been taking in past years. Last year, in addition to the inclusion of "Bisexual" in the march title (thereby diverting a political issue into a sexual one), there was no lesbian representation among the speakers at the rally. Nor were any lesbian (or women's) issues addressed. This despite the fact that the great majority of the participants in the march are lesbian.

"... When we tried to explain that we felt that lesbian and gay issues were not identical to bisexual issues, because bisexuals continue to enjoy heterosex-



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Mythbusters, from previous page

be raised and it will not help to pretend that bisexuals don't exist, or to lump them together with "heterosexual allies." A politicized bisexual movement can play a significant role in the struggle to end women's oppression and for lesbian and gay liberation. A lesbian and gay liberation movement that is unable to recognize this will make the politicization process that much more difficult.

The many bisexuals who have participated in the march in the past have done so not out of charity, but in the interest of their own liberation. There is much that needs to happen in the creation of a politicized bisexual community, but we believe the conscious inclusion of bisexuals in this movement to be a key step in the struggle against heterosexism and male dominance. At one time the march's title did not refer to "pride," but to "liberation." Next year, while including bisexuals in all aspects of the march, let's bring back the radical vision of the former title and call it the Lesbian, Bisexual and Gay Liberation March.

Karin Baker
Helen Harrison

The Moving Violations is an organization to promote safe motorcycle riding among women. It is open to women regardless of sexual orientation, although the majority of the membership is lesbian. The club was formally invited to lead Northampton's parade, but declined. The decision to decline was not unanimous, and there were several members who voiced their intentions to still participate in the march as individuals. The following editorial was written by a charter member, Ingrid Sell, who is co-editor of the club's newsletter.

In her introduction she writes: "Interestingly enough, one of the most vocal defenses of the biphobic Northampton march organizers came from a woman I have known for many years and know to be bisexual, although she doesn't identify herself as such. It's really sad - and painful - to see one of our own cutting her own throat in defense of her closet! But, on the other hand, it was quite heartening to get the support of the majority of the club in refusing to support the Northampton march organizers' policies."

Her editorial:

Why I Won't Be Riding (or Marching) in Northampton Gay Pride This Year

Let's face it. We're rebels, and that's why so many people in the gay community love us. Just the sight of any one — never mind all — of us on her bike is enough to remind people that some of us have the guts to deviate from the straight and narrow — to follow our hearts rather than someone else's standards. And we're inspiring to those with less fortitude than

us — after all, isn't that even how some of us got our start in biking? In just learning to ride, each of us has made a commitment to stepping outside the bounds of what's deemed "acceptable" for a Lady. There are definitely costs — hassles with landlords, being called "Dyke" by teenage boys hanging on the corner, being followed and stopped at random by the cops so they can inspect my inspection sticker (after not being able to invent any better excuse for pulling me over!). Beyond the joys of biking in itself, I'm finding that more and more, the price of hiding, the price of fitting in like another mousy little Lady is ultimately far greater than that of facing the ignorance-fueled hatred head-on with my dignity intact.

Despite the difficulties it sometimes causes me, I find I can't accept living as a second-class citizen, in any area of my life. And key to that is being able to say who I am, being able to be as I am, without having to pass for something that fits someone else's notions of what's the right way to be.

It's especially painful when the bigotry comes from my own community. Like any bigotry, it's born of ignorance and fueled by a free-floating anger that would probably be more appropriately directed at the forces that are keeping us all down — but that would be taking real, dangerous risks. I have to be clear about this — even though the hot topic on the Northampton march is the name, I personally don't particularly care about it — it's really an exercise in politically-correct semantics that I can't be bothered with. I don't call it LESBIAN AND Gay Pride — I just call it Gay Pride (keep it simple, folks). So whether BISEXUAL is added to the name or not really doesn't concern me.

But read the Northampton Pride organizer's statement carefully. [It] talks about what they call a "compromise structure" — which boils down to, everyone — lesbian, gay, straight, bisexual — is welcome to do the dirty work on the March, but only "pure" Queers are allowed into leadership positions. Now, I can pass for the perfect lesbian — I'm in a long-term monogamous relationship with a woman, I've been visible and active in the gay community for 10 years. I have not been in a relationship with a man in 13 years. I haven't been sexually involved with a man since I got sober — so I can blame all my past history with men on alcoholism — if it's politically expedient to do so. But ethically, I cannot do that. I know that I am, in reality, bisexual. And what this means, in terms of the Northampton Pride March, is that I'm good enough to clean their toilets but not good enough to hold a leadership position — regardless of my other qualifications. Who defines what is truly "Lesbian" or "Gay" or "Bisexual"? And in an atmosphere of such repressiveness, any deviation from the politically-correct

Mythbusters continued on next page

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(from previous page)

ual privilege, we were told we could 'pass' if we dressed differently. Mrs. Siegel announced that she could speak for the lesbian community 'because I have always felt like a man in a woman's body.' And so on. The horror continued.

... We postponed discussion of the new makeup of the Steering Committee until the following meeting. It was decided that the Steering Committee should be comprised of gay men and lesbians, for we realize that we must speak for our own agenda.

... For reasons we cannot comprehend, some bisexual women seem to feel they cannot create their own community, but must attach themselves to the lesbian community. For many of us, our lesbianism is a way of life, not just something we do in bed. If Mrs. Siegel and her ilk are so concerned with having their sexual minority status respected, why don't they march in the Lesbian/Gay Pride March as supporters, under their own banner? ...

◆
Responses sent to Northampton's Pride Committee:

... To say that bisexual people are categorically not members of the gay community and are therefore of less value to you (politically, organizationally, spiritually, whatever) is offensive and oppressive, and I cannot remain silent. Your attitude helps to perpetuate misconceptions and fears, and is destructive not only to self-identified bisexuals, but to all people who have bisexual



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Mythbusters, from previous page

queer purity becomes risky. By actual definition, many more of us are really bisexual than purely homosexual. The decision of the Northampton Pride Committee to relegate Bisexuals to second-class citizen status is a giant step backwards in our collective fight to determine for ourselves what is right for each of us.

I remember the first time Robin and I went on the Northampton March — I think it was in '82 or '83. It was small — just a few hundred people, and along the way we were met by furious right-wingers holding inane signs like "God made Adam and Eve, not Adam and Steve" etc., their faces contorted with fear and hatred. At the end of the march route, there was a big contingent of the right-wingers — not as many as the people in the march, but enough to be very scary. Yet it was quite exhilarating to march — directly in the face of ignorance and hatred. I was looking forward to participating in this year's march, both for nostalgic reasons, and because I think it's important to give support to a smaller march than the Boston parade. However, I simply cannot support an organization that can turn around and kick its own in the face. I can not participate in a "PRIDE" celebration that tells me to be ashamed of who I REALLY am, since it doesn't fit the mold as they designed it. Hopefully, Northampton will learn from this year's disaster and be more thinking next year. Regardless of what the rest of the club decides, I know that in good conscience, I will have to stay away this year.

Ingrid Sell

Three letters sent to Gay Community News:

OOh, I am so upset! I just read the letter in GCN [from Sara Dreher and Lis Brook] responding to Micki Siegel's letter of the previous week regarding the exclusion of bisexuals from the Northampton Pride Steering Committee and the removal of the word "bisexual" from the name of the march. This is a response to that particular letter, and to all who just don't get why bisexual people keep having the audacity to insist on "attaching themselves to the lesbian community." The authors ... seem to feel that to identify as a lesbian is to make a strong political statement, while to identify as bisexual is simply a non-political statement about a person's bed partners, and that the addition of the "B" word to the Northampton march last year resulted in reducing the meaning of the march from a political event to a simple statement of sexuality. Well, I maintain that self-identifying as bisexual is very much a political statement.

... I am proud of my bisexuality and for me my bisexuality is an extremely political issue. I strongly identify as part of the larger "gay" community. When I march in Pride I march for my own interests as well as those of my friends

and loved ones. Gay liberation is my liberation. When out with my girlfriend I would not get just halfway beat up by a gay basher . . . I would not be fired from only half of my job by a homophobic boss . . . If I had children, I would not lose only half of them in a custody battle with an angry ex-spouse . . . I wouldn't lose half of my apartment if I were living with my woman lover and my landlord didn't like that . . . Homophobia doesn't work that way. Yes, bisexuals who are not "out" will not suffer direct effects of homophobia. But neither do lesbians who are not out.

... The "queer" community is homosexual, but it is by no means homogeneous. And yes, some bisexuals have different issues than some lesbians, but then so do some gay men. Should we perhaps hold three different marches? Why the divisiveness? We're all in this together. I refuse to be stifled by people who feel that they are somehow empowered to set rules for who may belong and who may not. Are celibate people queer enough for you? Are people who are closeted in various areas of their lives qualified? How about lesbians who occasionally sleep with men? How about lesbians in "marriages of convenience." Will we begin to be screened at the entrance to the pride march and told whether we may march with the "true" queers" or whether we must go march with the allies? ...

Bi & Proud,

Robyn Ochs
Cambridge, MA

Dear GCN:

Sarah Dreher and Lis Brook state that bisexual women should "create their own community" and not "attach themselves to the lesbian community." As someone who has been attaching my self to the women's community for 20 years, I don't feel like a lamprey eel or something.

... We need to be clear on whether an event is for women, for queers, or for lesbian separatists. I strongly support lesbian separatist events and spaces, and I personally would never intrude as a bisexual woman. I support the right of the women at [the Jamaica Plain women's bookstore] Crone's Harvest to "unwelcome" men and also the right of any minority to meet alone for honest, soul-filling exchange. But a Queer Pride Rally is another event entirely. Historically it has been a coalition event, even though it is for Queer Pride primarily.

There are no easy historical parallels to this bi-women-versus-lesbian-identity phenomenon. It is new. I see it as one of the most recent proud offspring of past liberation movements: free speech, civil rights, anti-war, feminist, and gay and lesbian. It is our strength that we keep evolving and growing. But new parents are

Mythbusters continued on next page

▼
(from previous page)

feelings — including those who go through a valid and very important bisexual phase before deciding to identify as straight or gay.

... I do not feel I have been mistaken these past ten years in thinking that, although I am not homosexual, I am still a valued member of the gay community. The fact that you doubt the legitimacy of my membership will not break my stride. I will continue to fight, with my brothers and sisters, for the right to love whom we choose, and to express our sexuality freely and without fear."

Kathleen Hepburn
Boston, Mass.
◆

... From the start, the [Lesbian and Gay Freedom Trail] Band and its leadership have included persons of a range of sexual orientation. Furthermore, the Band traditionally has given top priority to issues of gender parity and the inclusion of minority members of our community. Therefore, we are disturbed by the purposeful exclusion of the bisexual voice from your Steering Committee and from the focus of your celebration.

... Those of us who are marching will be wearing Bisexual Pride buttons as part of our uniform in support of and in celebration with our bisexual brothers and sisters. Throughout the 1990 Pride season, The Freedom Trail Band will strive to represent lesbians, gay men, and bisexual people; to serve our community through music; and to create an environment where we can all Stay Out and Stay Proud."

The Lesbian and Gay Freedom Trail Band
Boston, Mass.

Mythbusters, from previous page

always skittish about new babies. We have a common struggle. Heterosexism rules; that much is clear. But we must separate institutionalized heterosexism as a system from 1) the homophobia of individuals, and 2) our personal/sexual choices. The latter two may change, but heterosexism lingers on. Whether I am with a woman or a man, I can choose to be closeted or not about my Queerness.

... Personally, I feel more like a bridge than a spy. I contribute to Queer Pride by simply being myself with the lesbians, as well as the men and the straight women I do hang with, when I talk about issues such as AIDS funding, foster care, domestic partner legislation, and queerbashing. Although I would march even if it were called a "Gay Pride March" again, I'm happier whenever I see "and Lesbian," and it lifts my heart whenever I see the recent "and Bisexual." Should I be allowed on the Northampton Pride committee? To paraphrase a remark I once heard, "two Queers, three opinions." I can only speak for myself when I say I would hope so.

I also hope that the women of Northampton who object to bisexuals at their Queer Pride March try to get beyond old stereotypes, get real, get updated, and get down! There's a lot of work to do in Patriarchyland! And we're here to stay. In 1983, when my group of six "BiVocals" put ads in the papers for our fantasy Boston Bisexual Women's Network, we didn't know who would show up. We never guessed that today we would have an international mailing list of over 700 names. Or that the Boston Bisexual Men's Network would be organized soon after. Or that the combined BBWN, BBMN, and regional East Coast Bisexual Network mailing list would add up to over 2,000 names. Or that national and international networks and conferences would spring up. Let's keep talking. Onward to the Les-Bi-Gay 90's!

With hope and glitter,

Marcia Deihl
Cambridge, Mass.

Dear GCN:

At a large community march meeting held on March 15, in Northampton sponsored by the Valley Gay Alliance and the UMass Program for Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Concerns, over 300 concerned individuals representing a wide range of sexual minorities attended. Many Lesbians at the meeting spoke of their own sense of discomfort, helplessness and exclusion from the march this year and in past years for a variety of reasons: 1. they are lovers or friends of Bisexuals; 2. they are themselves Lesbians coming out as Bisexuals; 3. they are Lesbians who are also Sadomasochists; 4. they are Lesbians who are coming out as having transgender/transsexual feelings ("feeling like a man in a woman's body is no horror, contrary

to Ms. Dreher and Ms. Brooks — it is simply a fact of life for another brave and proud group of newly-emerging oppressed people. Besides, Gertrude Stein identified most comfortably as a straight man, Radclyffe Hall's friends called her/him "John," Willa Cather went a.k.a. "William."); 6. they are friends of male-to-female transvestites (the talented drag queens who performed against the grain at last year's Northampton Pride rally); 7. they are partners/lovers of female-to-males; 8. they are friends of Gay men and straight allies who find this year's Steering Committee and march a hostile, oppressive environment to anyone without Lesbian Separatist convictions. The current dangerous trend to narrowly define who "belongs" in Lesbian community is intolerant of our differences which ought to be respected and is self-destructive to the Lesbian movement itself.

... I am beginning to think some Lesbians in the Northampton area are stuck back in the middle 70's with no personal or political resources for generosity of spirit and grace. While we're moving toward self-definition, pride and "respectability," let's take all of us along! The sexual is personal. The personal is political. Lesbians, Gay men, Bisexuals, S/Mers, TV's and TS's have an enormously difficult life experience in common: persecution because who we love and sleep with, or how we sleep with who we love (or ourselves), is different than conservative heterosexuality.

Speaking of "visibility" ... at what price, and who pays? Because we do not wish to march over the bodies of other hurt, excluded and silenced sexual minorities for an exclusive (albeit tiny) place in the sun for Lesbians in Northampton this May, the New Alexandria Lesbian Library (NALL), which has been part of the Valley Lesbian and Gay community for 11 years, will not participate in the march with our Library banner this year, for the first time ever in Northampton history. SHELI (a woman-to-woman S/M support group for Lesbians and Bisexual women) and many more Lesbians, Gay men, S/Mers, TVs and TSs, will also choose to refuse the terms of this year's discriminating Northampton Lesbian/Gay march.

We'll hop on a community bus to diverse New York City Pride instead ... and bask in the glow of a sun large and free enough to shine on us one and all. And while we're there, we'll remember with gratitude that a leather-jacketed, crossdressed Lesbian transvestite minority woman and her drag queen supporters began it all at Stonewall. Still cause for celebration today ... even down Main Street, Northampton, USA.

Sincerely,

Bet Power
Director, New Alexandria Lesbian Library
Director, SHELI

The International
Directory of
Bisexual
Organizations is
available for \$2 at
the BBWN Office,
338 Newbury
Street, Boston.

BISEXUAL PRIDE!

Volunteers needed
to be reporters at
the National Bi-
sexual Conference.
Call (617) BIS-MOVE
to volunteer.

Betrayals, from page 1

Somehow the women's movement has stopped discussing the politics of male/female relationships to any great extent. Lesbian feminists generally treat women who have male partners as deserters who have opted in favor of the patriarchy. Somehow it seems as if, by choosing male partners, we have given up a stake in our own liberation. The renewed popularity of marriage in the '80's begs all the questions feminists asked about the institution 20 years ago.

As a bisexual, and more importantly a feminist, I cannot easily sidestep the dilemma inspired by access to this socially-sanctioned state. Having a partner of the opposite sex and therefore marriageable means having access to privilege. But heterosexual privilege often comes down to a trade off between autonomy and safety. We're free to walk hand in hand with our male lovers down the street and no one throws things at us (if he's the right color). But only because we're perceived as that man's property.

It's an insidious choice. Who's to say that the perks that come with having a male lover don't subtly and not-so-subtly push us into relationships with men — or keep us in them longer than we might have otherwise stayed, despite vigilance on our parts? And yet for my bisexual friends and I, most often it's a question asked after the fact. We fall in love with a person first, and the specific quandaries that come from their being female or male come later.

I used to formulate it this way: "Either one can take advantage of the legal/financial advantages the contract of marriage makes available (i.e., passports, health insurance, tax breaks, etc.), or one can make a public pledge of commitment, sharing the relationship with friends and family. But if you do both, you lose your soul." The weight of both legal and societal expectations seems too great to allow anyone to maintain their sense of self. But I can't dismiss out of hand the choices my bisexual and heterosexual friends make. What about my friend who needed \$1,500 worth of dental work done, and her male partner's job included dental benefits while hers didn't?

What is at the root of my distrust for this institution? I know that a relationship between a man and a woman can be equal, honest, respectful and loving. I've lived in such a relationship. It's the notion of becoming a wife that makes the blood run cold in my veins, turns my heart to ice. To marry is to disappear, when we have spent so many years becoming visible. As feminists, we have fought to create the freedom for ourselves to exist as individuals, not as someone's daughter or sister or fiancee; the right to be self-determined, strong or even idiosyncratic. We have spent years demanding that we be accepted as human beings first,

whether in our choice of work, mates or thoughts, slowly pushing away the towering walls of femininity that defined our identities.

But by taking on this one new title, wife, all of that is negated. Whatever we or our partners may feel about the notion of marriage, we become wives and husbands to the world. These identities are so defined by our culture that we cannot hope to define them ourselves. We cannot control or escape the societal identity bestowed upon women who become wives.

Try it on a bus someday. Talk to a stranger and say, "My husband." Some other time say "my boyfriend" or "my lover," or "my girlfriend." As a wife you suddenly become safer, softer, playing by the rules. But to be an independent woman is to be inherently threatening. And being a feminist, in my definition, is merely claiming that independence.

The reality that marriage represents can't be ignored: unequal property ownership laws in many states, unfair divorce laws, the issue of violence within marriage which is often legally sanctioned. It's too easy to be put off by people who don't want their status quo questioned. "Why are you bringing that up again? I thought you feminists got over all that stuff about marriage years ago. Come on, these are the 80's, we've got to get on with our lives."

We do have to get on with our lives, but honestly and honorably. Eventually it comes down to living as honorable a life as one can. We as heterosexual and bisexual women must acknowledge our unique position of privilege and use any benefits that come from that position to further the rights of all people — lesbians, gay men, bisexuals and heterosexuals. We, perhaps even more so than lesbians, have a responsibility to work toward a world where one's choice of a sexual partner does not define who one is or what one can do. Those of us who are currently with men can use the tiny bit of temporary protection our relationships provide to speak up even more strongly for lesbian and gay rights. We cannot hide behind assumed heterosexuality.

I don't have any simple answers as to what should be done. Human life and relations are too complex for simplistic codes of behavior. But it worries me to see a rush into what I had thought of as a sexist and annihilating legalized relationship. Instead of working for the right to domestic partnerships for everyone, there seems to be a general rush to the altar. The papers may be full of "the return of the traditional wedding," but my feminist friends are the ones getting married, and it scares me. The idea of a male/female couple choosing not to marry on moral ground is beginning to sound as outdated as virginity. But those moral grounds remain. At what point did it become wrong to question the status quo?

© Beth Reba Weise

Arts & Ideas



BiWomen needs
you!

Express yourself:

SKETCHES

POETRY

WRITINGS

THOUGHTS

Send them to

BiWomen
BBWN

338 Newbury Street
Boston, MA 02115

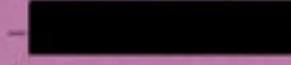
San Francisco Sunrise

Tracing the snake down your back,
I taste the hollows on both sides
of the garden;
salty skin
so like mine,
burying kisses
in fertilized fear;
I love you in the garden
with the snake,
we taste you
with our growing together
under this blanket
in America.

— Michelle M. Maihot

Looking Glass

Under watchful eyes
Hard to be bi openly
Careful of my secret



Volunteers are
needed to staff the
BBWN/BBMN office
at the Lesbian and
Gay Service
Center, 338
Newbury Street,
Mondays from 6pm
to 9pm (or a
portion thereof).
Can you spare one
Monday a month?
Or two? Sign up at
the office, or call
(617) BIS-MOVE to
volunteer. We will
provide all the
necessary training.



Illustration by Tamara Bower

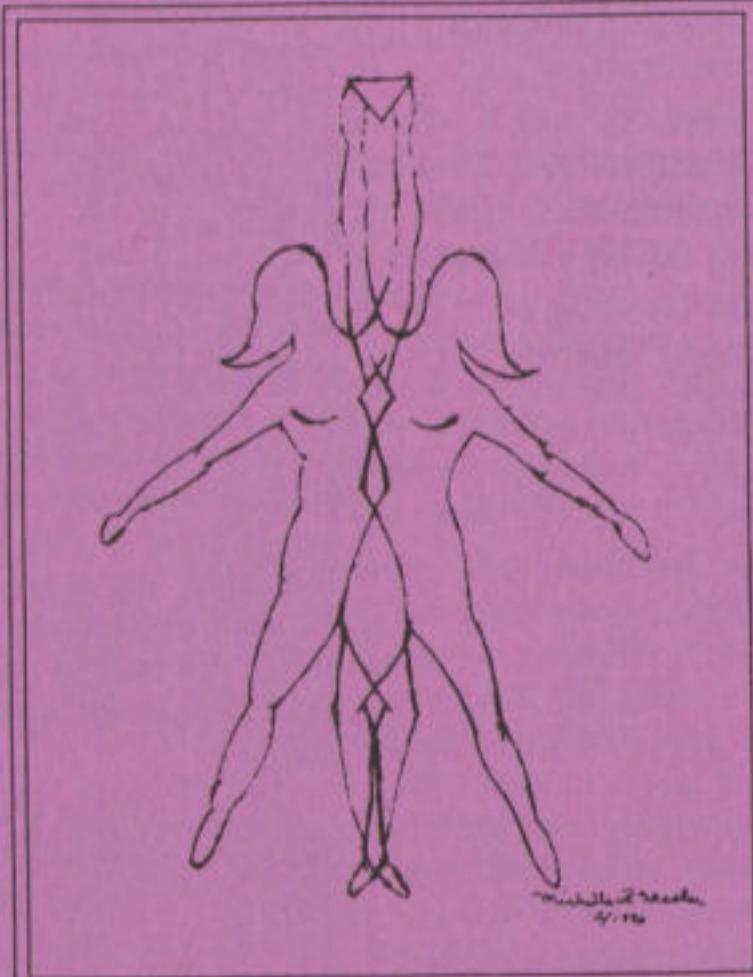


Illustration by [redacted]



From I Sing the Body Electric

I have perceiv'd that to be with those I like is
enough,
To stop in company with the rest at evening is
enough,
To be surrounded by beautiful, curious,
breathing, laughing flesh is enough,
To pass among them or touch any one, or rest
my arm ever so lightly round his or her neck
for a moment, what is this then?
I do not ask any more delight, I swim in it as in
a sea.

There is something in staying close to men and
women and looking on them, and in the
contact and odor of them, that pleases the
soul well,
All things please the soul, but these please the
soul well.

— Walt Whitman (1819-1892)

Bi the way . . .

- New
- South
- Shore
- Group
- Now
- Forming
- Call BBWN at
247-6683 for more
information.

Lend us your eyes . . .

BBWN maintains an archive of materials related to bisexuality at our office at 338 Newbury Street. We ask each of you to keep your eyes open for any written materials relating to bisexuality. Newspaper clippings (please list source), magazine and journal articles, newsletters from other groups, academic papers, dissertations and theses are all welcome. Please mail the materials to BBWN, c/o GLSC, 338 Newbury Street, Boston, MA 02115.

Names Projects Joins Boycott of VIth International Conference on AIDS

San Francisco, CA — The Board of Directors of the NAMES Project Foundation, the San Francisco-based sponsor of the International AIDS Memorial Quilt, have decided to boycott the VIth International Conference on AIDS, which will be held in San Francisco, June 20-24. The boycott is in response to the U.S. federal government's visa restrictions discriminating against people with HIV infection.

"It is with mixed emotions that we announce our decision to boycott," said David Lemos, Acting Executive Director of the NAMES Project. "While we realize the tremendous need for this annual forum for AIDS information, we abhor the U.S. government's travel policies affecting people with HIV infection. The travel restrictions are in direct conflict with the NAMES Project's objective of working toward an immediate and compassionate response to the AIDS pandemic. We therefore, cannot in good conscience, participate in a worldwide conference held in this country, while these travel restrictions exist. We also wish to emphasize that our action is prompted solely by these government policies and is not intended to indicate any lack of support for the conference organizers."

As a result of withdrawal of NAMES Project participation, the Quilt will not be displayed within the conference this year.

The quilt will, however, be on display in San Francisco at the end of June. Conference attendees, those visiting for the Lesbian and Gay Freedom Day Parade [and for the National Bisexual Conference June 20-24], as well as residents, will have the opportunity to visit the Quilt at Ft. Mason's Festival Pavilion, June 20-24. Sections of the Quilt will also be on display at the San Francisco International Airport, as well as in the windows of several prominent downtown department stores.

Research Study on Bisexuality

Participants are needed for a study of bisexual women and men, their relationships and the kinds of self-disclosures that they make about their sexual orientation to various people in their lives.

This study is open to men and women who currently consider themselves bisexual regardless of the degree to which they have 'come out' about their bisexuality to other people. Diver-

sity is also sought in terms of age, partnership and marital status, ethnicity, geographical location, and personal and professional background.

The study is structured as a confidential and anonymous survey questionnaire that can be filled out in about one hour. There will be no personally identifying information in the completed report.

The researcher is a bisexual person, a licensed psychotherapist, and a doctoral candidate in the Ph.D. psychology program at the California Institute of Integral Studies, San Francisco.

Your involvement in this research is appreciated as is that of any friends or acquaintances who consider themselves bisexual and who are interested in participating in the study.

For information and questionnaires for yourself or for other interested persons, contact:

Ron Fox
P.O. Box 210491
San Francisco, CA 94121
(415) 751-6714

Rape Survivors

Contributions are sought for an anthology of survivors on adult sexual assault (rape). The collection will focus on the personal and social-political contexts within which women incorporate our rape experiences into our lives. I especially want to explore the connections between the pressures survivors experience to put our rape experiences behind us and be "normal again" and the isolation and denial that surround our real needs and concerns.

Survivors of stranger and acquaintance rape, including women of all ages, abilities, class, educational, religious and ethnic backgrounds, and sexual preferences, are encouraged to contribute their stories. Submissions should be in the form of personal narratives and may be written or taped. Deadline: JULY 1, 1990.

For more information and guidelines, write:
Survivors
P.O. Box 460895
San Francisco, CA 94146

BBWN Now Staffing Bi Office

Live Bisexuals on the Telephone! We are now staffing our office at 338 Newbury Street, Boston. Office hours are Monday evenings from 6pm-9pm. The number is 247-6683 (BIS-MOVE).

CALENDAR

Ongoing Events:

- First Sunday of the month:
Bi Space. 8pm. A place for all bisexual people to come and meet other bisexuals and talk about bisexual issues. No agenda or set topic, just a friendly space for whatever develops. \$2 donation requested. Sponsored by the East Coast Bisexual Network. Gay and Lesbian Service Center, 338 Newbury Street, Boston, MA. Wheelchair accessible.

Sundays:

Alateen Group open to bisexual, lesbian and gay youth 22 and under, afflicted by alcoholism in a family member or a close friend. 6pm at the Boston Gay & Lesbian Service Center, 338 Newbury St., Room 202K.

Tuesdays:

Bisexual Women's Rap Group. 7:30pm-10pm at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant Street, Central Square, Cambridge, MA. All women welcome. Call (617) 354-6658 for more info.

Wednesdays:

Bisexual Children of Alcoholics. 7:30pm. An Al-Anon meeting for bisexual children of alcoholics. Mass. General Hospital, lower amphitheater (next to the emergency room entrance), Boston, MA. Call Marge at (617) 259-1559 for more info.

June 1 ♦ Friday

New England Gay and Lesbian Contra & Square Dance, Providence, RI. Call Chris (401) 431-0822.

Lesbian, Gay & Bisexual Swing Dance. At Ballet Etc., 185 Corey Road (2nd fl.) in Brookline. 8:30pm-12 midnight. Free lesson at 8:30.

June 2 ♦ Saturday

NEGAL Contra & Square Dance, Hartford, CT (see June 1 listing).

Portland, Maine, Pride Parade. Call (207) 883-6934 for more info.

June 4 ♦ Monday

BBWN Introductory Meeting. 7:30pm Women's Center, 46 Pleasant Street, Cambridge, MA. All women welcome. Call (617) BIS-MOVE for more info.

June 9 ♦ Saturday

Bisexual Brunch. Before the March, 9am-11am, Community Church of Boston, 565 Boylston St., Boston, MA. Sponsored by BBWN. Men welcome. Call BIS-MOVE for more info.

Boston Gay Pride Parade. Call (617) 262-3149 for more info.

Two-Steppin' for AIDS benefit dance at the Villa Victoria, 85 Newton St., Boston, MA. 8pm-2am. Call (617) 825-3268 or (207) 967-0787 for more info.

Gay Pride Day Dance Celebration!!! Caller: Cindy Green. Call Phil at (617) 729-9206 or Janet at (617) 522-2216 for more info.

June 15 ♦ Friday

NEGAL Contra & Square Dance, Providence, RI (see June 1 listing).

June 16 ♦ Saturday

Outlaw Cardinal Law. Protest at Holy Cross Cathedral, 75 Union Place at Washington Street, 10am - 1pm. Call Liz at (617) 253-6693 or call (617) 49-ACTUP for more info.

BBWN/BBMN Monthly Dim Sum Brunch in Chinatown. Meet at the Chinatown gate on Beach Street in Boston about 10:45am. Call (617) 247-6683 for more info.

June 20-24 ♦ Wednesday-Sunday

1990 National Bisexual Conference, San Francisco, CA. Sponsored by BiPol in San Francisco. For information write to BiPol, 584 Castro St., Box 422, San Francisco, CA 94114.

June 21 ♦ Thursday

Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Speakers Bureau meeting. 7pm-9pm at the Lesbian and Gay Service Center, 338 Newbury St., Boston. Call 354-0133 for more info.

June 23 ♦ Saturday

NEGAL Contra & Square Dance, Boston, MA (see 4/28 listing).

Hartford, Conn., Pride Parade. Call (203) 523-4678 for more info.

June 24 ♦ Sunday

New York City Pride Parade

June 25 ♦ Monday

BBWN Non-newsletter Volunteer Night. 6pm-10pm. At the Lesbian and Gay Service Center, 338 Newbury Street, Boston.

July 14 ♦ Saturday

BBWN Picnic on the Esplanade. 1pm-5pm. Men welcome. Meet near the Arthur Feidler Footbridge. Rain date July 21. Call (617) BIS-MOVE for more info.

July 15-17 ♦ Sunday-Tuesday

Feminist Women's Writing Workshop's 15th Annual Conference. New York Finger Lakes Region. For brochure send SASE to Mary Gilliland, FWWW, PO Box 6583, Ithaca, NY 14851.

July 16 ♦ Monday

BBWN Coordinating Committee meeting. 7pm-9pm at the Gay and Lesbian Service Center, 338 Newbury Street, Boston, MA. Call (617) BIS-MOVE for more info.

July 21 ♦ Saturday

BBWN/BBMN Monthly Dim Sum Brunch in Chinatown (see June 16 listing).

July 30 ♦ Monday

BBWN Volunteer Night to stuff the Aug./Sept. issue. 6pm-10pm. Lesbian and Gay Service Center, 338 Newbury Street, Boston, MA.

August 6 ♦ Monday

BBWN Introductory Meeting (see June 4).

LOOKING AHEAD ...

September 7-9 ♦ Friday-Sunday

BBWN and BBMN go to Provincetown. Mark your calendars now.

August/September 1990

Vol. 8 No. 4

Bi Women

The Newsletter of the Boston Bisexual Women's Network

INSIDE

<i>BBWN News</i>	2
<i>Letters</i>	3
<i>Why Biphobia?</i>	11
<i>Interviews with Sandra Bernhard</i> ...	12
<i>etcetera</i>	13
<i>Calendar</i>	14

Bi Visibility in Boston Pride March

The Boston Bisexual Women's and Men's Networks, marching behind the beautiful lavender BBWN banner, led the bisexual contingent in Boston's 1990 Lesbian and Gay Pride March on June 9. The increasing visibility of bisexuals in the gay community was evident in the large number of banners that included the word "bisexual" – Tufts University, MIT, Valley Gay Alliance (of western Mass.) and Portland, Maine, among them. Also present was the group Bisexuals at Digital (Equipment Corp.), declaring "We're BAD!"

The day began with a well-attended Bisexual Brunch sponsored by BBWN. Charnan Bray and her irreverent group of fruit cutters gathered

Boston Pride *continued on page 10*

1990 National Bisexual Conference

A report by Liz Highleyman

The first ever National Bisexual Conference took place June 20-24 in San Francisco, coinciding with that city's Gay Freedom Week. The conference was sponsored by San Francisco's BiPol and the Bay Area Bisexual Network, with assistance and input from a wide range of individuals and groups.

Over the past years, bisexuals have been becoming more aware of ourselves as a distinct community. We share many of the same concerns as gay men and lesbians, and many of us consider ourselves to be part of those communities, but we also have issues that are unique to us as bisexuals. Other bisexual people may have a lifestyle that resembles that of the "typical" heterosexual, but cannot express all

Bi Conference *continued on page 4*

PHOTO BY ROBERT MUNAFÒ



The Bi contingent at Boston's Lesbian and Gay Pride March

BBWN News

Honor Roll

◆
Sharon W.
Robyn O.
Laura S.
Kathy H.
Heidi F.
Marge L.
Charnan B.
Michelle H.
Alison T.
Susan C.
Rebecca G.
Ann G.
Sharon G.
Sue W.
Marcia D.
Naomi H.
Sue S.

BiWomen is published bi-monthly, of course.

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Contributors:
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[REDACTED] Laura Sachs

Photo Maven:
Laura Sachs

BiWomen needs editors:

News
Arts & Ideas
Calendar
Mythbusters
Other departments?

Call BIS-MOVE to volunteer

July 14, 1990

Coordinating Committee Meeting notes

Attending: Laura S., Heidi F., Robyn O., Alison T.

Statement of Purpose. Robyn will draft proposal for 9/17 CC mtg., to be amended and voted upon at that meeting.

Laura will organize a BBWN reception for women to come socialize and see the office and the Center on Oct. 29, 7-9pm. Special outreach to college-aged bis.

Robyn will design annual membership forms. Drive starts with this newsletter.

Financial report. We have approx. \$1,000. (We're holding steady.)

Change Sustaining Member category to Baby Goddess.

We need a volunteer coordinator. Laura will write notice.

Survey. Robyn & Heidi designed coding form for questionnaire. We need volunteers to help code forms. If interested in helping, call BIS-MOVE.

Permission granted by CC to do questionnaire mailing for Ron Fox.

Laura will try to contact People of Color Caucus to see if they have a report back or want to put anything in BiWomen.

Heidi will continue to pick up mail. Next envelopes will have new address on them.

Next meeting 9/17. Agenda: Statement of Purpose, update bi-laws, planning social events, BBWN organizers retreat.

* * * * *

DEADLINE for the

 Oct./Nov. issue:
Friday, September 7 at noon.

All submissions in writing, please, and include a name and phone number. Send articles, calendar entries, letters, art, news and views to:

BiWomen, BBWN
338 Newbury Street, 202C
Boston, MA 02115

Advertise in BiWomen!

For only \$10 per issue, your message will reach over 700 subscribers. Save \$5 and advertise in three issues for only \$25.

Send your business-card sized ad and a check to:

BiWomen
BBWN
338 Newbury Street, 202C
Boston, MA 02115

A Message to Married Bisexual Women

Although the pages of this newsletter may sometimes seem filled with articles about bisexual women in the lesbian/gay community, a large number of married bisexual women are among the members of BBWN. Because many of you are in a position where coming out would be too much of a risk, you may feel isolated. And there are those of you who are out, but still feel isolated because your social circles do not include other bisexual women. BiWomen can be your voice, your link to others who are in the same position as you are.

Share your thoughts, frustrations, joys and experiences. Reach out! You can write to us and ask to be published anonymously. No one else can write with authority about what it is like to be married and bisexual - you are the experts. As always, send your contributions to BiWomen, BBWN, 338 Newbury Street, 202C, Boston, MA 02115.



'Ivy'



1990

Letters

Dear Friends:

I'm writing to you on behalf of two groups in Chicago who are interested in learning more about how you organized BBWN, and how we can work together in the larger North American Bisexual Network which is now forming.

The University of Chicago Bisexual Union is a recognized, Student Activities Organization supported group comprised of men and women undergraduate and graduate students, faculty and staff. We meet weekly to check in and discuss any issues at hand relevant to a bisexual lifestyle. Most of our members were at one time or another affiliated with the campus GALA, until they eventually decided to form a Bisexual Union that would be more responsive to their needs.

The second group, just now forming, is the Bisexual Political Action Coalition. This group, open to all Chicago area residents, will host men's and women's consciousness raising groups, aimed specifically at support and community building, and will join together for political action aimed at getting recognition for bisexuality as a viable sexual identity/lifestyle within both the Gay/ Lesbian and the heterosexual cultures.

Because both groups are new, and because every bisexual I know complains of the paucity of information about bisexuality generally available, we would like to know more about you: what you do, and how you did it. We would especially like you to share with us any literature, films/videos, exhibits, music — anything at all — having to do with bisexuality of which you know, even if they are primarily geared towards women's experience, so that we can begin to explore and enjoy these together.

Also of special interest to several members of these groups is the possibility of forming a computer network/bulletin board to communicate with each other and, when necessary, raise a "call to action." If there are any cyber-types in your organization, let us know where they can be reached.

While this letter may seem a rather imposing list of demands for information, I'm sure you understand how important it is for bisexual persons to recognize and support each other as we begin to seek national recognition. While, unlike straights, we do share homosexual experiences — and commitments — with the

Gay/ Lesbian communities, we are many of us tired of being considered experimenters, exploiters, fence-sitters, or politically incorrect. On the other hand, because we do have heterosexual experiences, yet live in a homophobic society, we are constantly challenged with how to incorporate our same-sex desires and relationships into our "straight" lives. Because for so long so many of us, women and men, have lived in this double closet, we know so little about who it is that we are, how we express our sexuality, how we identify with each other and interact with those who are "monosexual," however inclined, that anything anyone else can share is valuable to us.

Thank you in advance for taking time to fulfill this request; I look forward to communicating with you in the future.

Best regards,

[REDACTED]
on behalf of University of Chicago Bisexual Union
Ida Noyes Hall, 1212 East 59th Street
Chicago, IL 60637

Volume IX
Number 2
February 1990

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BISEXUALITY

A National
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Publications
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Long Beach, CA
90801-3917

Staffers are needed for the Lesbian and Gay Service Center. If you are interested, please call Michael Goldrosen, the Center's manager, at (617) 247-2927.

Bi Conference, from page 1

aspects of their experience in a strictly heterosexual context. Bisexual conferences provide us with the opportunity to explore our identities and our culture, and to consolidate strong and supportive networks. The national conference was unprecedented in bringing together hundreds of bisexuals from across the country (including a large contingent from the Boston area!), as well as from Canada and as far away as Europe and Australia.

The first three days of the conference consisted of plenary sessions and workshops, as well as time for caucusing, cultural performances, and informal networking. The plenaries consisted of the key conference organizers and a diverse array of speakers addressing a multitude of issues of concern to bisexuals. Special attention was given to the concerns of people of color, the formation of a national bisexual network, and the perspectives of international participants. By a proclamation of the Board of Supervisors of San Francisco, June 23rd was declared the first ever official day of bisexual pride.

Reflecting the diversity of the bisexual community, workshops covered a wide range of topics, roughly broken into tracks such as feminism, sexuality, relationships, therapy, AIDS issues, politics, and coming out. There were workshops aimed at married and straight-identified bisexuals, as well as gay- and lesbian-identified bisexuals. Two particularly well-attended workshops were dialogue sessions between bisexual women and lesbians, and between bisexual and gay men. Several workshops were "how to" sessions to share skills such as group organization, publishing, newsletter production and public relations. There were a number of workshops on safer sex and living with HIV, as well as one conducted by bisexuals involved in AIDS activist groups such as ACT UP. And, of course, there were the ever-popular workshops on sex, fantasy, and erotica, as well as some new and unexpected themes, such as a workshop for bisexuals in the sex industry.

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Robyn Ochs, Laura Sachs and Woody Glenn at the National Conference in San Francisco.

Caucuses included bisexual people of color, disabled bisexuals, young and old bisexuals, and bisexual anarchists. There were presentations of recent research on bisexuality, the results of which are beginning to fill a long-standing gap in sexuality research, which has to this point focused primarily on homosexuality and heterosexuality. As many would expect, research is showing us to be a diverse and widespread population! We also had the opportunity to hear about several publishing projects currently in the works, which will contribute to filling another gap, the lack of an explicitly bisexual voice in the literature on sexuality.

One outcome of the conference was the solidification of the North American bisexual network. Meetings were held each day to discuss various details, and work is currently ongoing. Many network issues were addressed at the conference. The anarchist caucus expressed a concern that the network should not become too centralized and hierarchical. Several others expressed the need to make a serious effort at outreach in order to include as diverse a range of bisexuals as possible, with a special emphasis on people of color.

In addition to the daily events, there was an evening of cultural performances by bisexuals, including music, dance and poetry. Many bisexuals are involved in a movement to discover a unique bisexual voice through the arts. The conference ended on Saturday with a dance for bisexuals and their friends.

For many, the highlight of the conference occurred on Sunday, when over 300 of us took part in the Gay Freedom Day Parade as part of the largest contingent of bisexuals and their allies ever to march in a gay pride parade. The bisexual group received a great deal of supportive applause from the spectators; clearly a sign that the bridge-building work between the gay/lesbian and bisexual communities is beginning to produce some long and eagerly awaited results. ▀



The First National Bisexual Conference:

Hundreds Celebrate an Emerging Community

by Greta Christina

The following is excerpted from an article that originally appeared in the San Francisco Bay Times (July 1990 issue). It is reprinted here with the author's permission.

The big story at the First National Bisexual Conference, held June 21 through June 23, at Mission High School in San Francisco, was the very fact that the event was taking place. After years of invisibility and invalidation from both straights and gays, bisexuals are organizing with a vengeance and beginning to get quite serious about creating a powerful national community.

The mood at the conference was an oddly stimulating one, sort of a pissed-off jubilation. Conference organizers and participants were tremendously excited that the event was happening at all, and were even more thrilled at the success of the event, measured both by the unexpected number and the diversity of participants. In his welcoming address on the first day of the conference, Master of Ceremonies Gary North from Long Beach cooed, "The First

National Bisexual Conference—ohh, I just can't say those words often enough!"

There was also a great deal of anger over the biphobia, both in the straight world and in the gay and lesbian community, which made the event necessary. In an eloquent and emotionally charged address, conference organizer and speaker David Lourea spoke of our collective anger over a government that has largely ignored the suffering of people with AIDS, a society that demonizes sex in general and deviant sex in particular, and a gay and lesbian community that has turned bisexuals into exiles. "We can be angry together, and that is something to be grateful for." His speech was met with a standing ovation.

The very existence of the conference was felt by many to be the most important aspect of it. Maggi Rubenstein, a founding mother of the bisexual movement in the Bay Area, summed up this attitude in her remarks on the opening day of the conference: "This is the year of the bisexual, and this conference has made it so."

Four-hundred-fifteen people were officially registered; about 300 people attended during the first two days, close to 500 were present on Saturday, and the bisexual contingent at the Freedom Day Parade was its largest ever, estimated at over 250. Organizers, workshop leaders, and participants came from all over the country and from as far away as Canada, the British Isles, and Australia. "The variety of workshops, the variety of participants, it's just incredible," said conference organizer and stage liaison Robin Dolan.

Celebrate continued on next page

PHOTO BY NINA CARROLL



Right: Members of the graduating class of the 1990 National Bisexual Conference. "Educate! Advocate! Agitate! Celebrate!" With at least 26 Bostonians present, Boston was the best represented city other than San Francisco! Seattle was also well-represented with 18 participants.

The International Directory of Bisexual Organizations is available for \$2 from the BBWN Office, 338 Newbury Street, 202C, Boston, MA 02115.

Celebrate, from previous page

One of the best-attended workshops in the conference was the dialogue between lesbians and bisexual women, and it was also one of the most emotionally powerful. Bi women and lesbians alike spoke of their fears toward one another, and of what could be gained by setting aside those fears and working together as queer women. Robyn Ochs, one of the very first activists in the bisexual movement and leader of the workshop, summed up the fears and hostilities by saying, "What we're both afraid of is that both of our realities will be denied." Several people spoke, with frustration but also with sympathy, of the substantial number of people within the gay and lesbian community who are closeted bisexuals.

Making Choices

The conference was infused with the awareness that not everybody sees making choices about sexuality as a good thing, and that in fact one of the greatest threats bisexuality presents to the conventional society (straight and gay) is the idea that an individuals' sexuality can cover a wide spectrum of feelings and behaviors over his or her lifetime. The simple existence of bisexuals challenges the idea of sexual identity as clearly defined polar opposites; if you can't clearly identify another person as gay or straight beyond the shadow of a doubt, you might begin to question your own sexuality. Several people pointed out

that American society is structured on the clear identification of a distinction between dominant and subordinate cultural opposites, not only straight/gay, but male/female, white/black, rich/poor, etc; and that bisexuals not only transgress against the dominant culture, but call into question the very existence of the distinctions themselves. In other words, a society that wants people to stay in their place isn't going to take too kindly to the possibility of human experience as personal transformation.

In discussions of biphobia, people constantly referred to the fallacy that bisexuals are the cause of AIDS spreading not only to the so-called "general population," but to the lesbian community as well; this misconception was generally seen as a metaphor for fears of impurity and contamination by *the other*, whatever that other might be.

Celebrate continued on next page

PHOTO BY ALISON T.



Above: The proudest, loudest cable car in the parade!

PHOTO BY ROBERT MUNAFÒ



Right: Some of the conference organizers taking a well-deserved rest. Behind them are panels from the NAMES Quilt bearing names of bi friends and loved ones who have died from AIDS. The quilt was on display in San Francisco during the bi conference.

This year's Gay Freedom Day Parade had its biggest Bi contingent ever (250-300!). We were also the 2nd or 3rd largest contingent in the entire S.F. parade!



Celebrate, from previous page

Clare Thompson, a workshop leader from London, England, presented the theory that bisexuals have a tendency to transcend determinism and dualism in areas of their lives other than sexuality; that they often hold more than one part-time job, choose interdisciplinary majors, move frequently, change career paths, and are generally willing to live their lives on a spectrum between choices that are normally seen as irreconcilable opposites.

Gender identities were discussed and questioned as well; Thalia Gravel, a male-to-female transgender bisexual, sees biphobia and the oppression of the transgender community as a part of the same opposition to the rejection of traditional gender choices, and Judy Gase, who led the gender workshop with Gravel, observed that, "My lover is a nonoperative transsexual; she has breasts and a penis. Does that make me straight, gay, bisexual, or what?"

Bisexuality's challenge to the easy pigeonholing of sexual identity was also seen as a cause of biphobia among gays and lesbians, perhaps even more so than for straight people. During the dialogue between lesbians and bi women, a number of lesbians expressed fears that their own hard-won sexual identity would be invalidated by bisexual women. And in her workshop on the difference between biphobia among gays and straights, Amanda Udis-Kessler pointed out that, since the gay and lesbian community has based its political identity as an oppressed pseudo-ethnic minority on the essentialist concept that "people are born gay - we can't help it, it's our biological destiny," - the notion that one's sexual identity is fluid and might be subject to change can be

seen as a threat to its power base.

Partly because bisexuality does cover such a wide spectrum of sexual behaviors and interests, and partly because of the experience of being shunned by both straights and gays, there was a massive sentiment toward acceptance of diversity, not only for sexual differences, but for cultural, racial, and lifestyle differences as well. Although the crowd was largely white, middle-class, educated, and able-bodied, it was not overwhelmingly so; there was a strong presence of disabled people and people of color, in significantly more than token numbers. An entire track of workshops focused specifically on bisexual people of color, and organizers and participants alike expressed a strong interest in creating a bisexual community that is multicultural and hospitable to any and all bisexuals and bi-friendlies.

Carol Queen, a conference organizer, stressed that since the bisexual community is by definition spread over a wide spectrum and difficult to categorize it might be more likely to be open to multiplicity and complexity within itself than other subcultures. "If we as bisexual people coming out and fighting these battles can give our gay and lesbian friends one message, I think this should be what it is: We don't have to be the same to stand together and give each other support. That's what all our attempts to make this conference accessible to people of different abilities, people of different cultures and races and religions, is all about."

And Ron Franklin, an African-American bisexual man and one of the conference organizers, felt that the outreach to bisexual people of color was one of the most important

Celebrate continued on next page

September 7-9

◆
Friday-Sunday

BBWN and BBMN go to Provincetown!

This is a weekend of unscheduled fun in one of America's truly great beach towns. People are responsible for their own housing and transportation. For a good deal on housing, contact Jean-Pierre at Dexter's Guest House, 6 Conwell Street, Provincetown 02657, phone (508) 487-1911. Bed & breakfast there is \$40-50 per room per night, double- or triple-occupancy. Space is severely limited, so call right away. Identify yourself as part of the women's (or men's) network. Call (617) BIS-MOVE if you want to carpool.

September 17

◆
Monday

Special Coordinating Committee Meeting

This is not your everyday ordinary Coordinating Committee Meeting. Come find out what the CC is, how it works, and how you might get involved. Do you have any ideas or opinions about what BBWN should do? How we should function? Events we should sponsor? What would attract you to an event? Come socialize, expand, confound... This is the space and the place to make things happen! Special emphasis will be placed on social events for the upcoming year. (Feel free to be shy, but come anyway!)



Judge

Celebrate, from previous page

elements of the conference. He commented, "One thing we're trying to do in organizing this is to be very inclusive of men, women, people of color, differently-abled. The push is to see that followed through so that it's not just statements on paper, it's not just wording; that there are people of color, differently-abled people, people from different classes, so that it becomes a true, very involved, very inclusive organization that addresses the special needs of people across the board."

One of the most inspiring stories came from conference speaker Susan Carlton, a bisexual student activist at U.C. Berkeley. Carlton told of her struggle to gain recognition of bisexuals within the campus gay and lesbian group, which is now called the Multicultural Lesbian/Bisexual/Gay Alliance; her struggle for acceptance of multiplicity evolved and eventually led to the formation of the United Front, a coalition between the MLBGA and African-American, Chicano/Latino, and Asian/Pacific student groups at Berkeley and it is one of the most vocal groups on campus.

Counterbalancing the sometimes obscure atmosphere of the conference was a strong emphasis on hard-headed, pragmatic advice about how exactly to accomplish the community's goals. Practical workshops ranged from leading bisexual support groups to dealing with the media, from building multicultural alliances to putting out a newsletter. Even the emotional support workshops often dealt with specific steps bisexuals could take to overcome internalized oppression, bridge the gap between bisexuals and the gay and lesbian community, and support one another in coming out.

And one of the most positive and promising aspects of the conference was its overwhelmingly feminist character. The majority of conference organizers were women, and almost everyone I spoke to of any gender not only identified as a feminist, but felt strongly that feminism had an important and valuable place in their personal life. In fact, there was an overriding sentiment that one of the best things about the bisexual movement was that it inherently challenges traditional attitudes about sex roles and relations between men and women.

The conference wrapped up with the presentation of a resolution by the San Francisco Board of Supervisors, declaring June 23, 1990 as Bisexual Pride Day. The resolution, which was presented by Kay Tsenin in behest of Supervisor Richard Hongisto was the first time any government organization has passed a resolution honoring bisexuals, and was seen by many as a major step towards visibility and recognition of the bisexual community. The formation of the North American Multicultural

Bisexual Network was announced, and conference organizers, workshop leaders, and participants all expressed a firm commitment to hold a second conference next year.

At the final assembly of the conference, Lani Kaahumanu, conference organizer and one of the most visible and enduring leaders of the bisexual movement, summed up a highly emotional address on the turbulent history of the bisexual movement with the words, "Standing here today, I feel like I've clicked my heels three times and come home." ▼



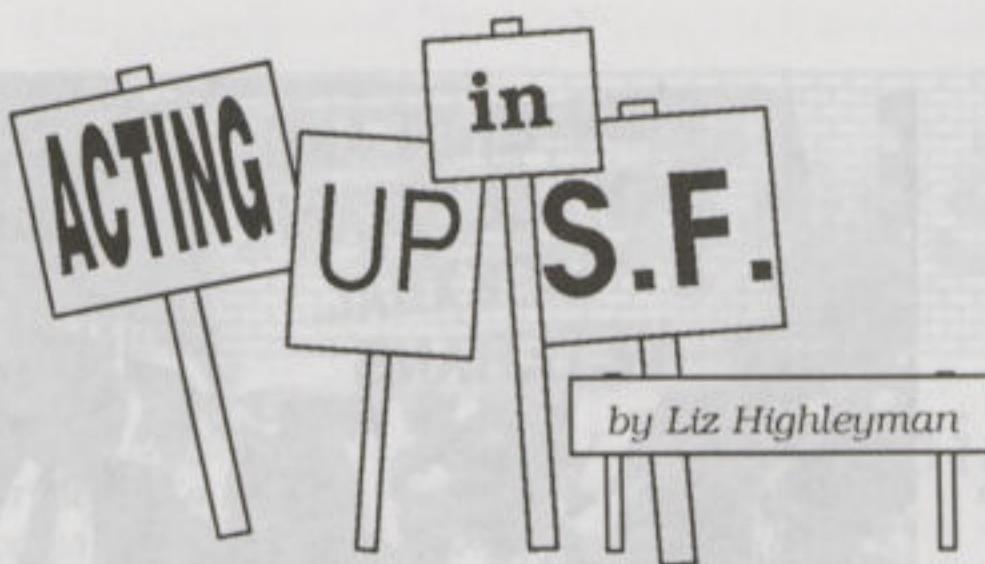
Why Biphobia?, from page 11

to women, and the sense of betrayal and powerlessness a lesbian may experience when a woman leaves her for a man. I would imagine that a straight black woman may feel something similar if a black man leaves her for a white woman.

The people who don't fit into either the straight-bisexual category or the gay-bisexual category are in a tough position. They get hit with everyone's overgeneralizations about "bisexuals," and they may have a hard time finding anywhere they really fit in. They have to deal with homophobia from straight people but they don't get much support from the gay community for it. For some, it may genuinely be the case that they are open to relationships with members of the same sex but the social realities make it a lot easier to find relationships with members of the opposite sex. Some may in fact be on the way to coming out as gay, but it still doesn't do them any good to have other people make smug assumptions about what's going on for them. Others may have formerly identified as gay, and gone through some pain and struggle before coming to identify as bisexual; then gay people tell them they're "taking the easy way out."

It doesn't help matters that some bisexual people also make generalizations or insist that their definition is the one "true" one. So you have the "bisexuals by definition aren't monogamous" thing, and the "bisexuality means that gender is irrelevant to attraction" vs. "my feelings for women are different from my feelings for men, but both are important to me" thing, etc., etc.

It may be that we need more labels, but we also need to stop categorizing people so neatly based on their labels. It's much harder to treat people as complex individuals than to treat them as stereotypes. It's worth the effort, though. ▼



Concurrent with the National Bisexual Conference in San Francisco at the end of June, there was also the VI International Conference on AIDS, and a week of accompanying activism by ACT UP and other AIDS direct-action groups. Several of the bisexual conference participants were delegates to the AIDS conference, and there were a few bisexuals whose time in San Francisco would not have been complete without almost daily activism. I, as you might have guessed, fell into the latter category . . .

The week began on Sunday, June 17th, with a day of workshops addressing issues such as the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) exclusion of HIV-positive travellers and immigrants, connections between reproductive rights and AIDS activism, and needle exchange programs. On the first day I was delighted to meet several bisexual ACT UP members, some of whom I knew from previous anarchist gatherings and actions.

The week's first action, on Tuesday, was a demonstration targeting the INS policies of exclusion of HIV+ people and of gay, lesbian, and bisexual people. 1,500 demonstrators marched through several downtown streets during rush hour, ending at the INS headquarters, where eight people were arrested for crossing police barricades. Subsequently, 100 demonstrators proceeded to the Marriott Hotel and staged a sit-in demanding increased access to the AIDS Conference for people with AIDS.

On Wednesday, the opening day of the AIDS conference, there was a 700-person strong protest outside the Moscone Center. Following guerilla theatre, the People with Immune System Disorders (PISD) caucus and their supporters crossed the barricades that kept us away from the conference center, against a large contingent of police. A sit-in was held on the sidewalk, and 80 people were arrested. Following the action, another march was held throughout the downtown streets, which included the commandeering of a cable car in the Powell Street shopping district as demonstrators chanted, "We're here, we're queer, we're not going shopping!"

Volunteers are needed to staff the BBWN/BBMN office at the Lesbian and Gay Service Center, 338 Newbury Street, Mondays from 6pm to 9pm (or a portion thereof). Can you spare one Monday a month? Or two? Sign up at the office, or call (617) BIS-MOVE to volunteer. We will provide all the necessary training.

On Friday was an action highlighting women's issues and demanding increased access to clinical AIDS drug trials and improved treatment for women. 1,000 demonstrators were present. After a speakout in front of Moscone Center, during which women bound themselves with chains of red tape, protesters took over Market Street at a major intersection. A die-in was held and over 100 people were arrested. Following the first wave of arrests, demonstrators retook the street, and a second civil disobedience action occurred, resulting in thirty additional arrests.

Sunday was the final day of the AIDS Conference. 300 ACT UP demonstrators, many with forged and donated delegate badges, entered the auditorium and drowned out the closing address of Health and Human Services Secretary Louis Sullivan by chanting, blowing whistles, and sounding airhorns. Although no scientific sessions were disrupted, ACT UP felt it necessary to counter the empty rhetoric of the Bush administration. George Bush's attitude towards the AIDS crisis was clear when he skipped the opening ceremonies of the AIDS conference, which the leader of the host country traditionally attends, in order to make an appearance at a fundraiser for arch-homophobe Jesse Helms. Many of the conference delegates joined in the protest by chanting and turning their backs. After this action, the demonstrators left Moscone Center, and proceeded to Market Street where they joined the large ACT UP contingent in the Gay Freedom Day parade already in progress. The merged group conducted a mass die-in at the reviewer's grandstand.

Throughout the week, ACT UP and their allies succeeded in breaking the silence and raising many issues. Until the AIDS crisis is over, activists will continue to act up and fight back.

I, and several other bisexual ACT UP members, had the opportunity to conduct a workshop on AIDS activism at the bisexual conference. ACT UP chapters are autonomous, and vary widely in their responsiveness to bisexuals. The group I am part of in Boston is quite bi-supportive, and although they may have to be reminded periodically to include bisexuals in their agenda, the response, on the whole, has been positive. The East Bay chapter in California was founded by bisexuals, and as such, bisexual concerns are in the forefront. In contrast, the San Francisco chapter has shown a somewhat hostile attitude toward bisexuals. Many of the members felt that a bisexual woman was not a suitable representative of ACT UP women as a speaker at the rally following the Gay Freedom Parade.

Many aspects of the AIDS crisis are of special concern to bisexuals. As with gay men,

ACT UP continued on page 13

Boston Pride, from page 1

on the eve of Pride Day at Robyn and Sharon's house to cut, slice, chop and peel, creating a delectable fruit salad — true to the tradition of seven years. All decided that next year's brunch will be pre-made quiche.

On the morning of Pride, 75-100 bis and friends gathered at the First Community Church in Copley Square for a brunch consisting of an array of bagels with cream cheese, juice, coffee, and, of course, fruit salad. After the brunch, most folks made their way to Government Center for the pre-Pride Rally, followed immediately by the March through downtown Boston. The theme for this year's Pride — "Proud of Our Past, Looking to the Future" — is one that we all can claim.



Above: Cliff Arnesen (holding banner on left), president of NEGLB Veterans; Rep. Byron Rushing (waving), D-South End, Fenway, Roxbury and incumbent candidate for the 9th Suffolk District seat; and City Councillor David Sondras (with beard).

ALL PHOTOS ON THIS PAGE BY NINA CARROLL



Above: Our banner, leading the bi contingent. Above, right: Tufts steps out! One of the many bi-inclusive banners at this year's parade. Right: Our banner can be seen above the crowd as we march up Park Street towards the State House. Directly behind the banner are the Rock Against Sexism banners.



Biphobsters

This article was written by a lesbian woman from Oakland, California, and posted to a computer discussion forum dealing with gay issues. It is reprinted here with the author's permission.

Why Biphobia?

by Dana Bergen

It seems to me that we have a word, bisexual, that's used a lot of different ways by different people; and then we have some people who label themselves bisexual and behave in unpleasant ways; and then we have the unfortunate tendency of human beings to generalize about a group based on a small sample. And some of the people getting generalized about may not even define the word bisexual the same way the ones in the small sample did.

I think that people are particularly likely to make negative generalizations about a group when they have reason to be distrustful of "outsiders." Most gay people, understandably, don't have a great deal of trust in a random non-gay stranger when it comes to sexual orientation issues. So, bisexual people may find that they have to prove their trustworthiness to gay people, and they run up against this "well, I've known six bisexual people and they were all X" stuff. And they're surprised, because they think they should be considered "insiders," and they get treated, not only as "outsiders," but often as "guilty until proven innocent."

There are people, who I think of as "straight-bisexual," who have all of their actual relationships with members of the opposite sex, but fool around some with members of the same sex. There's nothing intrinsically wrong with this, but many of us have had unpleasant experiences of one kind or another with particular members of this category. Maybe they toyed with our affections, or maybe they were in a threesome once and then claimed that they knew everything about the experience of being oppressed as a gay person, or maybe they were really homophobic about actual gay people while considering themselves cool and liberated for being bisexual. Maybe they were very out about being bisexual in settings where this would get approval, and never out about it in settings where it wouldn't get approval. Maybe they criticized gay people for being "closed-minded," and claimed to be equally open to relationships with either sex, but somehow it just "accidentally happened" that all of their significant relationships were with members of the opposite sex.

Or, maybe we haven't had bad experiences with straight-bisexuals, but we mostly hang

around with gay people, and we don't see where we have much in common with the straight-bisexuals in terms of social/cultural milieu.

So we're not hostile to

them, but we don't view them as more likely to become our friends/lovers/allies than any other straight person.

And maybe some of the straight-bisexuals we encountered considered their own lifestyle to be the definition of "bisexual," and maybe we took their word for it, and when someone else came along calling themselves bisexual, we assumed that they would never take a relationship with a member of the same sex seriously.

I went to college in the late 1970s and knew a lot of people, women especially, who identified as bisexual. All of them fit into my definition of "straight-bisexual." Most of them didn't engage in the objectionable behavior I describe above; some did. All of them that I know about, except for me, ended up in heterosexual marriages or serial heterosexual relationships. They are, for the most part, nice and decent people. But they haven't shared my experience of living as a lesbian any more than any other straight person.

Then there are people who I think of as "gay-bisexual," who have all of their relationships with members of the same sex, but fool around some with members of the opposite sex. Some gay people may be suspicious that the gay-bisexual is going to turn into a straight-bisexual; after all, it's easier to be straight in the world, right? (I don't agree that it's always easier, but that's another issue.) So they are distrustful of the gay-bisexual.

Then there's the fact that some gay people find it comfortable to think of their homosexuality as exactly like heterosexuality, only a mirror image. They are uncomfortable with anyone who doesn't fit into an "absolute" black-and-white category. Another factor is that a lot of people, gay people included, consider the idea of sex with their non-preferred gender to be icky, so someone who does that is icky by association. Then there's this thing people frequently do when they've had a powerful personal growth experience, which is they assume everyone else is just like them. They couldn't be well-adjusted without 12-step/EST/gestalt therapy/whatever, so you can't be either. If they went through a stage of identifying as bisexual on the way to coming out as gay, then anyone who identifies as bisexual must be on the way to coming out as gay. Among lesbians, there is the issue of "loyalty"

Why Biphobia?continued on page 8

Sassy Sandra

The following are excerpts from two interviews with comedienne/actress Sandra Bernhard which appeared in recent issues of *Glamour* (a women's fashion magazine) and *The Advocate* (a gay national weekly magazine). Bernhard is currently starring in *Without You I'm Nothing*, a movie based on her "smash-hit one-woman show."

Glamour: What do you think are the problems of a gay woman in Hollywood?

Sandra Bernhard: I don't consider myself a gay woman in Hollywood. I consider myself to be a woman who makes choices without any pressure from society or family. I do what I want to do.

G: If famous gay performers came out would their audiences disappear?

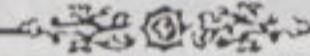
SB: Of course not.

G: Then why don't they?

SB: It's probably a fear that they wouldn't be considered appealing as leading ladies or something, which I find absurd. It probably doubles their appeal, because it seems that all men want to do is watch two women get it on. It's a real double standard. The fact is, Hollywood's run by a lot of gay men and women, which cracks me up. But I understand why nobody wants to put all their cards on the table. Everybody wants their options left open. At least I do. I mean, I like everybody. You know: Double your pleasure, double your fun. It's the Doublemint theory.

G: If you had a choice, would you rather be pretty, rich or smart?

SB: Smart, then rich. If you're smart and rich you can always buy pretty.



The Advocate: Are you afraid of being "outed"?

Sandra Bernhard: There is no closet [for me] to come out of; there's no concern. With the exception of political figures who are gay and voting antigay, which is a whole different thing, I think outing is just an invasion of people's privacy.

A: Are you open about your sexuality now?

SB: Well, at the moment, I'm involved with a man. He's someone I met in New York. He's a great guy, and he's straight.

A: I'm speechless.

SB: Well, I'm sure a lot of people will be.

A: Is this a new experience?

SB: No, it's not a new experience [giggles]. It's a little different for women than for men. I think men who are gay are a little more committed to being gay – it's a bigger trip for a man. For women, especially when you're in your 30s, you start having these maternal feelings, and

you start thinking about wanting to have a kid at some point. I've played out so much of my life and had so many self-indulgent experiences, but I had them in my 20s. Now that I'm in my 30s, I think I'm ready for something a little more substantial.

A: But couldn't you have a substantial relationship with another woman?

SB: Yeah, if you're a lesbian – a committed lesbian.

A: If you are a certain way for a long period, can you just shut down that part of you?

SB: I haven't been "a certain way for a long period." I've never shut down any of my emotions toward anybody. Isn't it obvious through my work that I'm not just one thing?

A: This isn't just a cop-out?

SB: I don't think you can fake fucking someone. Either it feels good, or it doesn't.

Certainly someone like me isn't going to pretend it feels good when it doesn't. I don't have anything to lose – or gain – by being with someone and faking it.

I'm not denying anything or backing down. I'll still be there for whoever needs me. That's the most important thing. I'm not the type of person who is going to get married and then turn my back on the gay community. My friends are not going to change. A great deal of my friends are gay. Why would I deny them – to deny my past and where I've been to make myself feel better? If you don't believe me, call my friends. Call my gal pals. I don't need to make up shit.

A: What about your well-publicized friendship with Madonna? Were you sort of working it at first?

SB: I don't think you can work somebody like Madonna. She's nobody's fool. She had trepidations at first, but we came to each other. I didn't come to her. She needed a friend at the time, and it really took someone within her sphere to feel safe with.

A: What do you mean by "within her sphere"?

SB: I mean in terms of outrageousness and that sense of fun and craziness we both have. There's not a lot of other actresses who would feel noncompetitive with her.

A: By perpetuating the myth that you were lovers and then denying it, were you in some way making a homophobic statement?

SB: Neither one of us thought about it in those terms, ever. To me, it was so funny and playful. I think if two people are involved with each other [as lovers], it's a much more neurotic, paranoid kind of thing. If we really were involved, we wouldn't have gone on Letterman, saying, "We're lovers, ha, ha." It was so obvious we weren't involved that, to me, anybody taking it seriously, especially at this point, is ridiculous. ▼

October 29



Monday

BBWN "Pop & Crisps" Reception

Private tour of the Lesbian and Gay Service Center for ALL members of BBWN. Cat-, smoke- and alcohol-free (but not goodie-free) event. 7-10 pm. Schmooze, socialize, sing. Come on and check it out! 338 Newbury St., 2nd floor. Auditorium stop on MBTA green line.

BiWomen

Attention Married Bisexual Women:

If you are a bisexual woman, married with or without children, and live south of Boston or in Rhode Island, let's get together to talk. Maybe a walk on the beach or help to form a support group. Call (617) 424-7025 (OK to leave a message if necessary).

Next Conference in Boston?

Hey, yo, all you bi guys and gals who are still feeling proud and fabulous since Boston Pride and the National Bi Conference in San Francisco! We are contemplating having the 2nd national 1991 or 1992 conference in early June (around Pride). You do want this conference to happen, don't you? It will only happen if enough people sign up to make a significant time commitment to work on the conference. Please fill out the form below and send it in to the ECBN office at 338 Newbury Street, Suite 202C, Boston, MA 02115, or call BIS-MOVE and leave your name, number, and the amount of time you'd be willing to commit. If there is enough interest, we'll call a meeting.



- YES, YES, YES!!! I'd love to work on this conference. I'd be interested in the following level of commitment:
- Something with lots of limits
- Be on or chair a committee
- Be a central coordinator (hopefully one of many)

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

New Names Project Chapter

The Names Project is an international AIDS memorial taking the shape of a huge quilt, made up of thousands of individual 3' x 6' panels. Each panel remembers the life of someone who has died of AIDS.

A new chapter of the Names Project has been formed in Western Mass. The group meets every Wednesday evening from 7pm-10pm at the Frontier, 19 Pearl Street, Springfield at Apremont Triangle. All those who would like to help in making memorial quilt panels are invited to join in remembering loved ones who have died of AIDS-related illnesses. Previous experience is not necessary. You do not have to be an artist. Bring your love and support. All completed panels will be made part of the National AIDS Memorial Quilt.

ACT UP, from page 9

many members of our community have felt the effects of AIDS and HIV infection. A workshop participant expressed concern that the bisexual community often feels unwelcoming to HIV positive persons. The bisexual community has been scapegoated as the means by which AIDS spreads from homosexuals to the "general population." This misinformation must be countered. As AIDS spreads beyond the gay

community and hits heterosexual communities (particularly inner-city communities of color), bisexuals may be in a particularly advantageous position to do AIDS education work; gay men and lesbians often lack the understanding necessary to do this type of work with heterosexuals. I am disturbed by the lack of AIDS activism within the bisexual community. The AIDS crisis shows no signs of going away, and it is just as much our problem as it is a problem of the gay community. AIDS activist groups will only become more responsive to bisexual concerns when more bisexuals begin to take part in them. Please consider joining your local ACT UP or similar AIDS activist group and taking part in their activities and demonstrations as an out and proud bisexual. ▼

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 Goddess: \$50
 Matron Saint (WOW!): \$100

Send this form along with your check to:

BBWN
338 Newbury Street, 202C
Boston, MA 02115

CALENDAR

THE CENTER

is the Lesbian and Gay
Community Center, 338
Newbury Street, Suite 202C,
Boston, MA 02115.

Ongoing Events:

◆ First Sunday of the month:

Bi Space. 8pm. A place for all bisexual people to come together and meet and talk about bisexual issues. No agenda or set topic, just a friendly space for whatever develops. \$2 donation requested. Sponsored by the East Coast Bisexual Network. At the Center. Call (617) 247-6683 for more info.

◆ Sundays:

Alateen Group open to bisexual, lesbian and gay youth 22 and under who are affected by alcoholism in a family member or a close friend. 6pm. At the Center.

◆ Tuesdays:

Bisexual Women's Rap Group. 7:30pm-10pm at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant Street, Central Square, Cambridge, MA. All women welcome. Call (617) 354-6658 for more info.

◆ Wednesdays

Bisexual Children of Alcoholics. 7:30pm. An Al-Anon meeting for bisexual children of alcoholics. Mass. General Hospital, lower amphitheater (next to the emergency room entrance), Boston, MA. Call Marge at (617) 259-1559 for more info.

August 5 • Sunday

Bi Space. See Ongoing Events column.

August 6 • Monday

BBWN Introductory Meeting. 7:30pm, Women's Ctr., 46 Pleasant Street, Cambridge, Mass. All women welcome.

August 11 • Saturday

The event you've all been waiting for! **BBWN goes miniature golfing!** 7pm at Golf on the Village Green, Route 9, Natick, Mass. \$3 each, less if we have 16 people or more. Carpooling encouraged. Call BIS-MOVE for info. Rain date: same time on Sun. 12th.

August 15-19 • Wednesday-Sunday

Michigan Womyn's Music Festival. Hart, MI. Music, workshops, community. Info: WWTMC, Box 22, Walhalla, MI 49458.

August 16 • Thursday

Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Speakers Bureau meeting. 7pm-9pm at The Center. Info: (617) 354-0133.

August 18 • Saturday

BBWN/BBMN Monthly (not Dim Sum this time!) Brunch. At the S&S Restaurant in Inman Square, Cambridge. Meet outside Placewares, corner of Cambridge and Hampshire Streets promptly at 10:45am. Info: (617) BIS-MOVE.

August 23-26 • Thursday-Sunday

Women's Motorcycle Festival. Western New York. For women bikers. Info: WMF, 7 Lent Ave., LeRoy, NY 14482, or call (716) 768-6054.

August 25 • Saturday

W.O.W. (Way Out in Waltham, Watch City's Lesbian, Gay & Bisexual Group). Field trip to Randolph Country Club (for dancing). 8:45pm. Info: Jennifer at (617) 893-0361.

August 25-31 • Saturday-Friday

Womencircles: A Shared Spiritual Journey. At Rowe Conference Center in western Massachusetts "to celebrate ourselves in our diversity, sing, dance, play & learn together, to reclaim our spirit, our power, our earth & our love." Info: Rowe at (413) 339-4216.

August 27 • Monday

BBWN Non-newsletter Volunteer Night. 7pm-9pm at The Center. Info: (617) BIS-MOVE.

Aug. 31-Sept. 3 • Friday-Monday

10th Annual Northeast Women's Musical Retreat. Info: NEWMR, P.O. Box 217, New Haven, CN 06513, or call (617) 361-8126.

Aug. 31-Sept. 3 • Friday-Monday

Labor Day Gay Retreat. At Rowe Conference Center in Mass. "Open to all, this retreat celebrates ourselves as gays & bisexuals." Info: (413) 339-4216.

September 2 • Sunday

Bi Space. See Ongoing Events column.

September 3 • Monday

BBWN Introductory Meeting. 7:30pm, Women's Ctr., 46 Pleasant Street, Cambridge, Mass. All women welcome.

September 6 • Thursday

BiWomen Newsletter production night. Bring in your submissions, learn to use the computer, offer advice and opinions on content and layout, or just witness the magic of desktop publishing. Info: Kathy at (617) 424-7025.

September 9 • Sunday

Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Swing and Ballroom Dance Classes begin. Sunday evenings series. Info: Sara at (617) 522-1444.

September 7-9 • Friday-Sunday

BBWN and BBMN Provincetown weekend! See page 7 for details.

September 7-10 • Friday-Monday

8th U.K. National Bisexual Conference, Edinburgh, Scotland. Info: Edinburgh Bisexual Group, 58a Broughton St., Edinburgh, EH1 3SA, Scotland, U.K.; or call Kate 031-556-9958 or Julia 031-556-0729.

September 14 • Friday

W.O.W. (see Aug. 25) potluck supper. Info: Jennifer at (617) 893-0361.

September 15 • Saturday

BBWN/BBMN Monthly Brunch. At the Rasmus Cafe, 175 Mass. Ave., Boston. Near the Christian Science Center. Meet outside the front door at 10:45am. Info: (617) BIS-MOVE.

September 17 • Monday

Coordinating Committee Meeting. Special meeting. See page 8 for details.

September 20 • Thursday

Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Speakers Bureau meeting. 7pm-9pm at The Center. Info: (617) 354-0133.

September 21-23 • Friday-Sunday

NAMES Project International AIDS Memorial Quilt Display. At the Johnson Arena, M.I.T. campus, Cambridge, Mass. Info: (617) 451-9003.

September 24 • Monday

BBWN Volunteer Night to stuff the Oct./Nov. issue. 6pm-10pm. At The Center. Info: BIS-MOVE.

October 29 • Monday

BBWN "Pop & Crisps" Reception. See page 12 for details.



Bi Women

The Newsletter of the Boston Bisexual Women's Network



INSIDE

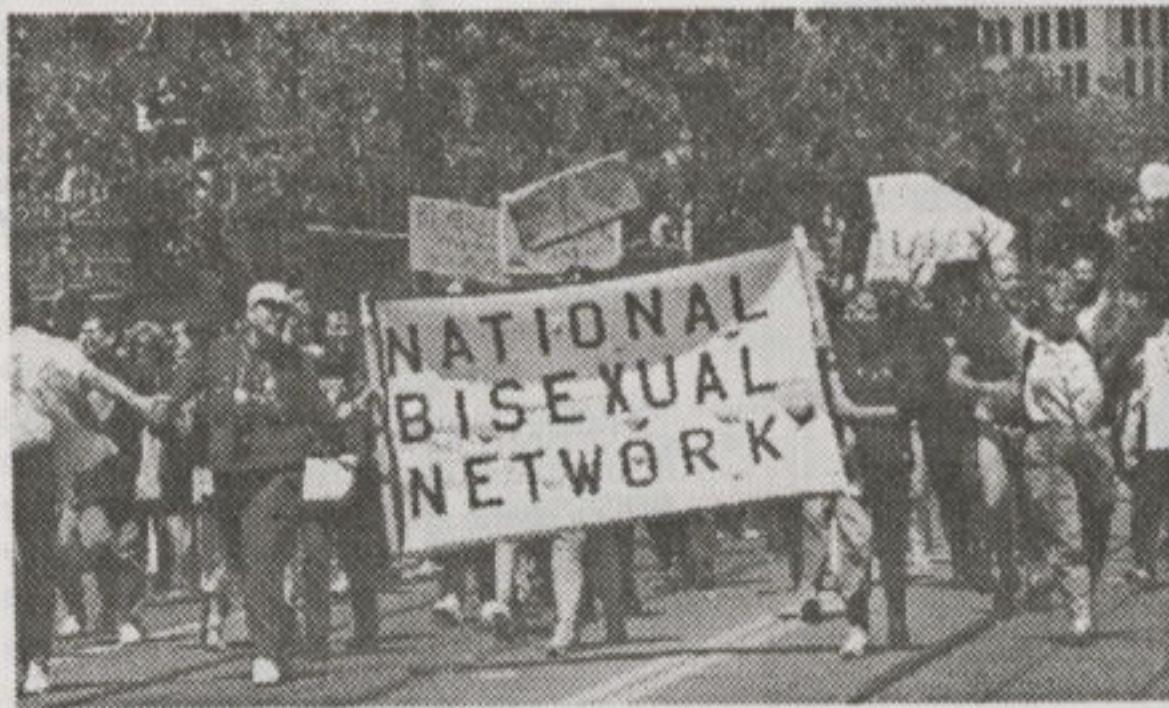
<i>BBWN News</i>	2
<i>Letters</i>	3
<i>Bi Conference</i>	5
<i>Mythbusters</i>	7
<i>Books</i>	10
<i>etcetera</i>	11
<i>Calendar</i>	12

North American Multicultural Bisexual Network Report

by [REDACTED]

For the sake of posterity I am going to try to reconstruct a fairly accurate chronology of the process involved in the formation of the North American Multicultural Bisexual Network [at the National Bisexual Conference in San Francisco in August]. I apologize for having forgotten the names of many people whose contributions I would like to have recognized. I would estimate that at least 60 people, each with a different point of view and agenda, participated in the NAMB Network discussions over the three day period of the conference. These discussions were difficult for both procedural reasons and because the content was so important. I would like to thank everyone who made positive contributions to making NAMB a reality.

NAMB continued on page 4



The Bi contingent marching in the San Francisco Gay Freedom Day Parade.

Bi (In)visibility at Gay Games III

by Kathleen Hepburn

Thousands of athletes from around the world gathered in Vancouver, British Columbia, this past August to celebrate Gay Games III and Cultural Festival. It



was the largest sports event in the world this year – a fact largely unnoticed by the media. This year's event honored the passing of the Games' founder, Tom Waddell. Originally named Gay Olympic Games, Gay Games do not stress competition. Rather, the Games follow Waddell's belief that to do one's personal best is the ultimate goal of any athletic endeavor. This year, some of the events were officially sanctioned, meaning that any records broken would go down in the books forever as having occurred at Gay Games. Three world records were indeed broken, all in swimming.

The Games are built on a principle of inclusion – any person of any age, race, ability or gender is encouraged to strive for their personal best. I believe that many women and men had wonderful, affirming, enriching experiences as participants in the event. However, I found the event to be less than inclusive.

I came away feeling that I had just spent a lot of money to participate in an event primarily for rich, white, non-

Gay Games continued on page 9

BBWN News . . .

Honor Roll

◆
Amanda U.
Kathleen H.
Rebecca G.
Heidi F.
Sharon G.
Claire M.
Laura S.
Robyn O.
Sue S.
Robyn O.
Marcia D.
Naomi H.
Michelle H.
Sue C.
Pam L.

BiWomen is published bi-monthly, of course.

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Kathleen Hepburn

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Robert Munafo, Robyn Ochs,
Claire Thompson, Nina
Carroll

Contributors:
Laura Sachs, Robyn Ochs

The Seven-Year Itch

BBWN just turned seven years old! We are experiencing a seven-year itch – is it time to reorganize? Renew? Restructure? All those women interested in scratching said itch, please come with your ideas and energy to a very important meeting on Monday, November 19, from 6 to 8 p.m. at the Center, 338 Newbury Street, 2nd floor, Boston, Mass. We encourage all BBWN activists – past, present and future – to attend and share your ideas.

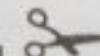
What you can do for this newsletter

- Send newspaper or magazine clippings that mention or relate to bisexuality
- Send us your poetry, sketches, songs
- Come to the Volunteer night to stuff the newsletter. It's a fantastic way to meet new and old friends. It is low-key and actually fun.
- Take on a section of the newsletter. For example, we need a **calendar editor** – to be the clearinghouse for events and happenings; compile the material; maybe type it into the computer. Anyone can do it! You don't need to be "well-connected" or knowledgeable about the community. You just need to be willing to accept the responsibility of compiling the information that gets sent to you, and willing to try to collect some more information on your own. We also need an **arts editor** – to gather information, perhaps write or solicit book and film reviews, or to highlight an upcoming event; and a **news editor** – ideal for those of you who read magazines and newspapers regularly.
- Tell us what you think. Write us a letter. Write an editorial.

The Boston Bisexual Women's Network is a feminist, not-for-profit collective organization whose purpose is to bring women together for support and validation. It is meant to be a safe environment in which women of all sexual self-identities, class backgrounds, racial, ethnic and religious groups, ages, abilities and disabilities are welcome. Through the vehicles of discussion, support, education, outreach, political action and social groups related to bisexuality, we are committed to the goals of full acceptance as bisexuals within the gay and lesbian community, and to full acceptance of bisexuality and the liberation of all gay people within the larger society.

Conference in Boston in 1991?

Still feeling proud and fabulous since Boston Pride and the National Bi Conference in San Francisco? We are contemplating having the 1991 conference in early June (around Pride). You do want this conference to happen, don't you? It will only happen if enough people sign up to make a significant time commitment to work on the conference. Please fill out the form below and send it in to the ECBN office at 338 Newbury Street, Suite 202, Boston, MA 02115, or call BIS-MOVE and leave your name, number, and the amount of time you'd be willing to commit. If there is enough interest, we'll call a meeting.



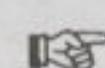
YES, YES, YES!!! I'd love to work on this conference. I'd be interested in the following level of commitment:

- Something with lots of limits
- Be on or chair a committee
- Be a central coordinator (hopefully one of many)

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____



DEADLINE for the

Dec./Jan. issue:

Friday, November 9 at noon.

All submissions in writing, please, and include a name and phone number. Send articles, calendar entries, letters, art, news and views to:

BiWomen, BBWN
338 Newbury Street, 202C
Boston, MA 02115

Letters

Dear BiWomen,

One good note for the bisexual awareness movement here in Boulder:

The formerly titled Gays, Lesbians and Friends in Boulder (the university student group) has made a major positive leap forward into the "Nineties" by changing their name to The Lesbian, Bisexual, Gay Community Alliance. We are not just Friends any more! I and other bisexual members of this student group successfully enlightened the lesbian and gay members about bisexual issues, and how the now former group name alienated bisexuals from the group. The Bisexual Womens' Voice has already applauded the L.B.G. Community Alliance on their name change. It would be great if this event is shared nationally and printed in the BiWomen newsletter.

Further, the Bisexual Womens' Voice was formerly invited to participate in the Gay and Lesbian (and Bisexual) Pride March last June in Denver. We Colorado bisexuals are still working on the official name change for the march.

Furthermore, there is a lovely spirited women in Fort Collins, Colorado who will be forming a women's bisexual group this fall on the university campus. She can be contacted through the Bisexual Women's Voice until the Fort Collins Group is formed.

Things are a' changing here in Colorado.

Bi and Peace
S. Ashford

*
Remember our address:

BiWomen

BBWN

338 Newbury Street, 202C

Boston, MA 02115

*

We need a **Volunteer Maven**. YOU have the potential to fill the much-needed slot and have legions of thankful, cute, happy women at your beck and call — literally at your fingertips as they are poised over the phone... Please call (617) BIS-MOVE and let us know if you are interested. Remember, if you like talking to women, this is the job for you!

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Lines and Circles

Crimes and circus clowns wound-up tighter than sailors knots...

fraught with the claims of a seedy man...

Men...caught within the mere

boundaries of thought...

their thoughts, men's thought...

a process incomplete—yet the

vitality of their own vigor allows

their acceptance as whole—

what fools.

Some can be such wholesome fools.

And you, swirling around in your dimdi skirt,

flail those petticoats and demean

the lust-torn he-man

of your dreams—

You fool-child with fire

In need of a parent with

a fly-swatter for you

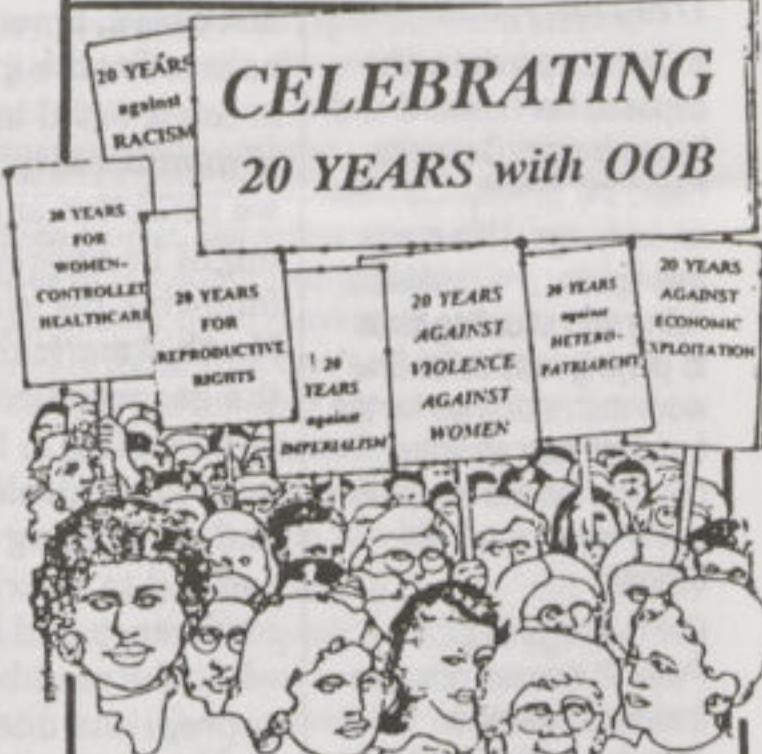
who prance in disgrace.

Anon

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VOLUME X
number 2
February 1990
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Famous Switch-Hitters

The following is excerpted from *Lesbian Lists: A look at lesbian culture, history, and personalities* by Dell Richards (©1990 Alyson Publications, Inc., Boston, Mass.)

1. Lady Emma Hamilton, 1761-1815, England

A commoner who made her way up the social ladder the hard way, Hamilton was the mistress of both Queen Maria Caroline of Naples and Admiral Nelson.

2. Catherine the Great, 1729-1796, Russia

A German princess who deposed her husband and became czar, Catherine hated the female role from an early age. Like many free spirits, she preferred riding and shooting birds to playing with dolls. She wore men's clothes for the freedom they afforded her, and led the troops in battle wearing a male uniform.

Her marriage to Czar Peter III was not consummated for nearly a decade. During that time, she had affairs and was known for her licentiousness. She reputedly had passionate affairs with both men and women.



(to next page)



NAMB, from page 1

On Thursday, the first day of the conference, the NAMB meeting was essentially a long brainstorming session. Lots of good ideas were generated, but since there were no guidelines for conducting the meeting or making decisions and because people kept coming and going, no concrete conclusions were reached until the end. The half dozen of us who hung on through the second workshop finally took ten minutes to decide on the agenda for Friday and Saturday. Beth and I volunteered to co-facilitate the Friday meeting, and Gary and I announced the results of Thursday's meeting and the plans for Friday's meeting at the evening assembly. That evening I incorporated most of the ideas from Thursday's meeting into the agenda for Friday and Saturday and wrote it all down on the chalk board. This took me about an hour!

Friday's discussion was more focused and we were able to use group process and make decisions by consensus. We discussed, among other topics, several names for the group, the geographical areas it could include, the possible types of membership, how long the structure we establish should last, and what dues might be appropriate. We made the following decisions: 1. the name — the North American Bisexual Network. 2. the geographical base — Canada, the US and Mexico. 3. types of members — individuals, self-defined bisexual groups and supporting groups. 4. dues — we decided to distribute a survey at the conference and by mail to determine what the membership would consider an appropriate dues schedule. 5. duration — the structure described above will be re-evaluated at the end of a year. These were all good decisions to make. However, they represented only a fraction of the agenda, and so we decided to hold an extra meeting that evening at the Women's Building later that evening.

In the process of arranging for an announcement to be made at the evening assembly, I discussed these decisions and plans with Lani and a few other women of color who pointed out that the evening meeting would conflict with the social in honor of the People of Color Caucus, that no people of color had been present at the afternoon meeting because it had con-

flicted with the People of Color Caucus Meeting, and that the meeting room we were proposing to use in the Women's Building was not handicapped accessible so we would need someone to coordinate transportation for that meeting. So I tried to canvass the people who had been at the afternoon meeting to find someone who would coordinate handicapped access to the evening meeting. Of course, everyone was fairly exhausted and no one would commit, so I cancelled the meeting.

Cianna and I spent about an hour Friday evening talking about how to facilitate Saturday's meeting. Even so, it would have been difficult to prepare for such a large and diverse group. Consensus was not always possible, in part because some of the people present were not committed to looking for a solution that everyone could agree on and support (even if it wasn't anyone's favorite solution). This became apparent when we reopened the question of what to call the group by proposing to add "multicultural" to the name. We ended up with seven suggestions, which we reduced to two by voting on them. This stressful process resulted in the current name — North American Multicultural Bisexual Network. The other decisions we arrived at mostly by consensus. They were: 1. to empower a core group of people consisting of all volunteers at the conference to a) produce a cover letter to be mailed to everyone on the conference mailing list telling them what progress has been made and asking for input, and b) from the responses to the cover letter, designate 10 to 15 people to be coordinating committee, making sure the committee is representative with regard to sex, race, age, geographical locations, etc. 3. the responsibilities of the coordinating committee are to collect information from and disseminate information to the North American bisexual community by means of a phone, a PO Box, and a quarterly newsletter. Although this seems like a drop in the bucket in light of all the work that could be done, that needs to be done, it seemed like a realistic, manageable set of goals. Michael volunteered to draft the cover letter, and Gary and Michael will produce the newsletter. The location and people

NAMB continued on page 8

3. Alla Nazimova, b.
1879, Russia

The wife of Hollywood director Charles Bryant, Nazimova cowrote and helped direct the screen version of Oscar Wilde's play *Salome*. Another of her movies, *Camille*, included a lesbian scene.

Ken Russell's 1977 camp classic *Valentino* includes Leslie Caron as Nazimova.

4. Natasha Rambova, b.
1897, U.S.

Set and costume designer on *Salome* and other films, Rambova was the wife of silent-screen heartthrob Rudolph Valentino, and sometime lover of Alla Nazimova.



(to next page)

The Quiet Stonewall? Bisexual Movement Comes Out Strong

by Sarah Murray. Excerpted from an article that first appeared in the San Francisco Examiner following the National Bisexual Conference in San Francisco in August.

"This is the bisexual harmonic convergence!" declared a jubilant Naomi Tucker at the beginning of the First National Conference of Bisexuality, held June 20-23 in San Francisco. And indeed, more than 400 bisexuals from as far away as Boston and Great Britain converged on Mission High School to see just what a bisexual movement might look like—and to see, and celebrate, each other.

The Bisexual Conference was easily overshadowed by the actions of ACT UP and the Sixth International AIDS conference. But by unsettling some of our settled notions of sexuality, this emerging bisexual movement may pose a radical challenge to some of the foundations of the gay and lesbian community that cannot be ignored.

The challenge can be heard in the "coming out" stories that were the constant backdrop of all Conference activity. The gay and lesbian

communities know the power of such stories; for years, gay and lesbian politics has been fueled by the power of "coming out" stories that are our folklore and often our individual salvation. But these stories offered new twists:

"Having been identified as a lesbian for many years," one woman in her early thirties explained, "with a long-term woman lover, I fell for a man. And I've been more intimate with him than anyone ever before in my life. And I don't know how to make sense of who I am anymore. Do I take all my feminist and gay posters down, do I take all my lesbian books off the shelf? How do I figure out who my community will be?"

Her hands slicing the air for emphasis, she continued, "Coming out as a bisexual has been more difficult than coming out as gay. I faced rejections by both the lesbian and gay communities and the straight world. But I'm not rejecting women by loving a man—I'm just being who I am."

Lani Kaahumanu, conference coordinator and a long-time activist in the San Francisco lesbian community, is also co-editor with Loraine Hutchins of a book of bisexual coming out stories, to be published by Alyson Press in November. She has been on the receiving end of many phone calls that spill out such stories, including two calls she got after an article on the conference appeared in the San Francisco *Examiner*. Many of those calls have come from publicly identified lesbians. "There are the hidden stories, the secret stories, the untold stories of our community," Hutchins says. And while both of these movement veterans know there are those who don't want to hear the stories, they are in firm agreement that "you've got to take the dirty laundry out so you can open the door wider," as Kaahumanu, the former housewife from San Mateo, says.

"This book will speak to the gay and lesbian community. It will speak to straight people too, it will speak to people across the sexual continuum. That's something bisexuality does," Kaahumanu said.

There lies the promise, and the problem, of a bisexual movement.

While feelings of painful isolation as well as anger towards the gay and lesbian community were clear in the stories told at the conference, equally clear is the conviction of the most vocal bi activists that the bisexual movement comes from and must remain tied to the gay and lesbian movement. "Bi people are predominantly oppressed around the same issues that gays and lesbians are," says Carol Queen, one of the organizers of the conference and a prominent member of the San Francisco S/M scene.

"I don't want there to be a separate bi Come Out Strong *continued on next page*



Some of the gang from Boston who attended the conference in San Francisco.

Famous
Switch-hitters
continued

5. Edith Lees Ellis, 20th century, England

A writer and lecturer in her own right, Ellis was married to pioneer sexologist Havelock Ellis. She fought for tolerance of "sexual inversion," as homosexuality was then called.

Although most people assumed she was heterosexual, she was the subject of one of her husband's most famous case studies of lesbianism.

6. Margaret Mead, 1901-1978, U.S.

At the height of her career, Mead was the most widely known anthropologist in the world. She wrote over forty books, the most famous of which is *Coming of Age in Samoa*. Married three times, she is believed by many to have had a romantic relationship with anthropologist Ruth Benedict.



(to next page)

Volunteers are needed to staff the BBWN/BBMN office at the Lesbian and Gay Community Center, 338 Newbury Street, Mondays from 6 to 9pm (or a portion thereof). Can you spare one Monday a month? Or two? Sign up at the office, or call (617) BIS-MOVE to volunteer. We will provide all the necessary training.

Come Out Strong, from previous page

community," said Beth Reba Weise of the Seattle Women's Bisexual Network. "I want there to be a unified sexual minority community." Weise, the editor of the Network's monthly newsletter, is one of the most respected and nationally prominent bi activists. Michael Beer, in a separate conversation days later, echoed her and added, "A successful lesbian and gay movement has created the space for a bisexual movement."

Despite this, many are also aware of the ways in which asserting a bisexual identity challenges the foundations of a political movement and community based on sexual identity. Weise said, "I'm a bit uncomfortable declaring myself a bisexual. The label doesn't seem as solid as the lesbian label. Because to declare yourself bisexual is to declare, really, that labels don't mean anything. So it seems paradoxical to declare this as an identity."

Amanda Udis-Kessler, an independent bi activist from Massachusetts, thinks that the emergence of a bisexual identity also personally challenges many politically involved gays and lesbians. "The emergence of bisexuality reminds people of the constructionist view of sexuality, whereas gays and lesbians have founded their community on an essentialist view. This causes not just a political challenge to the community, but also a crisis of meaning for many gays and lesbians."

The constructionist view of sexuality claims that sexual identity is not "natural" but is culturally created — and therefore can be challenged and changed as well. The essentialist view is that sexual orientation is biologically determined.

Udis-Kessler suggested in a paper presented at the conference that constructionism has been resisted by the gay and lesbian communities because it has been associated with the idea that people choose to be gay or lesbian. She argues that choice is a separate issue — that saying our notions of sexuality are culturally shaped does not lead to the conclusion that we as individuals freely choose to be homosexual.

Her belief is that the constructionist viewpoint can offer the most radical critique of sexual politics in Western society. It forces us to question how and why certain characteristics, like sexual behavior, become singled out as the most important markers of social identity. And it "dares us to build bridges, among and beyond sexual identities, based on a broad analysis of how systems of oppression operate and interlock in the modern world."

Beer sees the bisexual movement as being poised on the brink right now, with a choice of directions. "Either we can take the established route of creating just another ghetto, one that basically excludes gays, lesbians and hetero-



Kate Friendly and Alison Thomas came all the way from the U.K. to attend the conference!

sexuals. Or we can take a leap, and cast a very wide net. We can try to be as diverse as possible, and almost try to come up with a synonym for the word 'sexual.' We can make this really be a movement not only about sexual liberation, but about ending lookism, racism, sexism, ageism. That's my dream. That's my utopia." ▼



Among the Multitude

Among the men and women the multitude,

I perceive one picking me out by secret and divine signs,

Acknowledging none else, not parent, wife, husband, brother, child, any nearer than I am,

Some are baffled, but that one is not — that one knows me.

Ah lover and perfect equal,
I meant that you should discover me so by faint indirections,
And I when I meet you mean to discover you by the like in you.

— Walt Whitman

Famous
Switch-hitters
continued

7. Elizabeth Arden,
1878-1966, Canada

Along with Helena Rubenstein, Arden invented the cosmetic industry as we know it today. In contrast to modern attitudes, wearing makeup in Arden's era was considered not only scandalous, but an act of rebellious feminism.

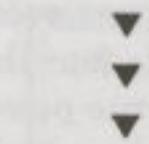
Arden was a leading figure in the 1920s New York homosexual circle that included theater manager and politician Elizabeth Marbury, Mrs. William Vanderbilt, Marbury's lover Elsie de Wolfe, and Anne Morgan.

8. Edna St. Vincent Millay, 1892-1950, U.S.

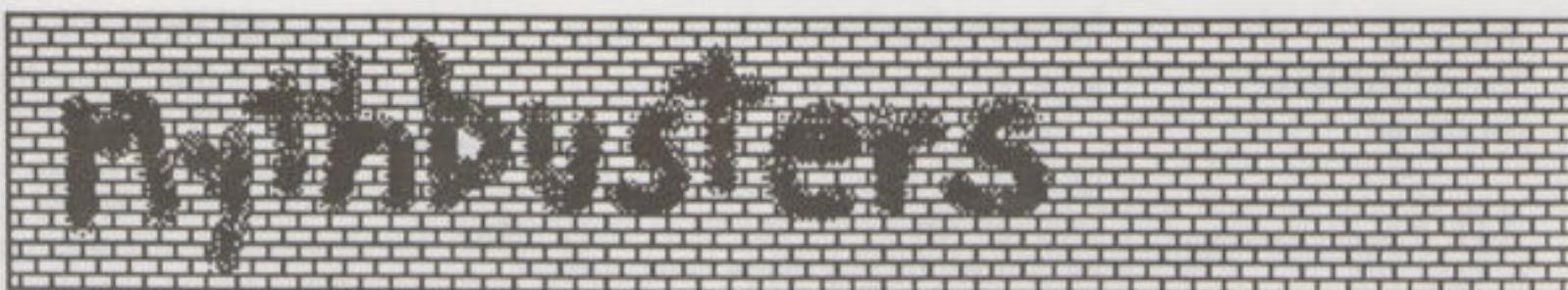
Millay achieved fame at an early age. Although married to Eugene Boissevain, she was an ardent feminist and an outspoken advocate of sexual freedom, including bisexuality.

9. Frida Kahlo, b. 1910, Mexico

An important surrealist painter, Kahlo had a stormy marriage to painter Diego Rivera. At the same time she had affairs with women. Many of Kahlo's paintings reflect her feminist world view.



(to next page)



**BACK TO SCHOOL SPECIAL:
Bisexuality 101**

What is Bisexuality?

Bisexuality is the potential to feel sexually attracted to and to engage in sensual or sexual relationships with people of either gender. A bisexual person may not be equally attracted to both sexes, and degrees of attraction may vary over time.

Self-perception is the key to a bisexual identity. Many people engage in sexual activity with people of both sexes, yet do not identify as bisexual. Likewise, other people engage in sexual relations only with people of one sex, or do not engage in sexual activity at all, yet consider themselves bisexual. There is no behavioral "test" to determine whether or not one is bisexual.

The Bisexual Identity

Some believe that a person is born heterosexual, homosexual, or bisexual (for instance due to prenatal hormonal influences), and that their identity is inherent and unchangeable. Others believe that sexual orientation is due to socialization (for example either imitating or rejecting parental models) or conscious choice (for example, choosing lesbianism as part of a political feminist identity). Others believe that these factors interact. Because biological, social, and cultural factors are different for each person, everyone's sexuality is highly individual, whether they are bisexual, gay or lesbian, or heterosexual. The "value" placed on a sexual identity should not depend on its cause.

Many people assume that bisexuality is just a phase people go through. In fact, any sexual orientation can be a phase. Humans are diverse, and individual sexual feelings and behavior change over time. The creation and consolidation of a sexual identity is an ongoing process. Since we are generally socialized as heterosexuals, bisexuality is a stage that many people experience as part of the process of acknowledging their homosexuality. Many others come to identify as bisexuals after a considerable period of identification as gay men or lesbians. An orientation that may not be permanent is still valid for the period of time it is experienced. Bisexuality, like homosexuality and heterosexuality, may be either a transitional

step in the process of sexual discovery, or a stable, long-term identity.

How Common is Bisexuality?

It is not easy to say how common bisexuality is, since little research has been done on the subject; most studies on sexuality have focused on heterosexuals or homosexuals. Based on research done by Kinsey in the 1940s and 1950s, as many as 15-25% of women and 33-46% of men may be bisexual based on their activities or attractions.

Bisexuals are in many ways a hidden population. In our culture, it is generally assumed that a person is either heterosexual (most frequently) or homosexual (based on appearance or behavioral clues). Because bisexuality does not fit into these standard categories, it tends to be denied or ignored. When it is recognized, bisexuality is often viewed as being "part heterosexual and part homosexual," rather than being a unique identity. Bisexuality threatens the accepted way of looking at the world by calling into question the validity of rigid sexual categorization, and encourages acknowledgement of the existence of a diverse range of sexuality. Since there is not a stereotypical bisexual appearance or way of acting, bisexuals are usually assumed to be either heterosexual or homosexual. In order to increase awareness, bisexuals have begun to create their own visible communities.

Bisexual Relationships

Bisexuals, like all people, have a wide variety of relationship styles. Contrary to common myth, a bisexual person does not need to be sexually involved with both a man and a woman. In fact, some people who identify as bisexual never engage in sexual activity with one or the other (or either) gender. As is the case for heterosexuals and gays, attraction does not involve acting on every desire. Like heterosexuals and gays, many bisexuals choose to be sexually active with one partner only, and have long-term monogamous relationships. Other bisexuals may have open marriages that allow for relationships with same-sex partners, three-way relationships, or a number of partners of the same or opposite gender (singly or simultaneously). It is important to have the freedom to choose the type of sexual and affectional relationships that are right for the people involved, whatever their sexual orientation.

Mythbusters continued on next page

Famous
Switch-hitters
continued

10. Tallulah Bankhead,
b. 1903, U.S.

One of the "four horsemen of Algonquin" in 1920s New York, this film goddess was as notorious for her barroom wit as for her sexual exploits.

Truman Capote's *Answered Prayers* details a party in which actor Montgomery Clift arrived drunk and soon passed out. Dorothy Parker immediately commented on his beauty, saying it was a pity he was a "cocksucker."

Bankhead, in her typical shattering style, replied: "Well, d-d-dahling, I r-r-really wouldn't know. He's never sucked my cock."

11. Nina Dyer, 20th century, England

Married to both Baron Hans Heinrich Thyssen-Bornemisza and Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan, Dyer was "Oliver" to her women lovers. One of her lovers gave her a Cartier bracelet with the inscription, "To my panther, untamed by man." She was, however, tamed by society and guilt ridden by what she considered unnatural desires. She committed suicide in her late thirties.



(to next page)

Mythbusters, from previous page

Bisexuals and AIDS

AIDS has had a major effect on the bisexual community. Bisexual men are often scapegoated as the agents of transmission of AIDS from the gay to the heterosexual population. However, it is behaviors, rather than sexual orientation, that put people at risk for developing AIDS. Activities that involve the exchange of bodily fluids, notably semen and blood, are especially dangerous. Bisexuals, as well as homosexuals and heterosexuals, must educate themselves about safe sex practices, such as the use of condoms and dental dams. Safe sex guidelines can be obtained from community health centers and AIDS education and action groups. Bisexuals are joining with gays and other affected groups in an effort to fight AIDS by calling for an increase in research and education and an end to discrimination against people with AIDS and those perceived to be at risk for AIDS.

Bisexuality and Politics

Because bisexuals do not fall within the norms of traditional sexuality, they experience many of the same types of discrimination faced by gay men and lesbians. Bisexuals are likely to face discrimination in employment, housing, and other opportunities, and may be victims of anti-gay violence. Efforts are underway in many areas to pass gay and lesbian rights laws; bisexuals must be included under these laws as well. Bisexual parents, especially those with non-traditional living arrangements, are at risk of losing custody of their children, and it is virtually impossible for acknowledged bisexuals to become foster or adoptive parents. Our society must realize that children need a loving and nurturing home environment, and that the ability to provide this is not determined by sexual orientation.

Bisexuals are an increasingly visible presence within a variety of political movements. Bisexuals are working with gays and lesbians on common issues such as foster care and AIDS, as well as fighting discrimination against bisexuals within the homosexual community. Efforts are underway to promote education and to counter myths and biased portrayals of bisexuals. Many bisexual groups exist for the purposes of support, socializing, and activism, and the number is growing. Bisexuals have the potential to become an important part of the effort to ensure equal rights for all people and to promote an acceptance of sexual diversity.

Resources

Bay Area Bi Network Newsletter, published bi-monthly. 2404 California Street #2, San Francisco, CA 94115.

BBMN News, newsletter of the Boston Bisexual Men's Network, published monthly. BBNM, 338 Newbury Street, Suite 202, Boston, MA 02115.

Bisexuality, News, Views and Networking, national newsletter. Gibbin Publications, P.O. Box 20917, Long Beach, CA 90801-2917.

BiWomen, newsletter of the Boston Bisexual Women's Network, published bi-monthly. 338 Newbury Street, Suite 202C, Boston, MA 02115.

North Bi Northwest, newsletter of the Seattle Bi-sexual Women's Network, published bi-monthly. P.O. Box 30645, Greenwood Station, Seattle, WA 98103-0615

What is Bisexuality? was prepared by BiCEP (the Bisexual Committee Engaging in Politics), under the auspices of the East Coast Bisexual Network. For more information, write to ECBN, 338 Newbury Street, Suite 202C, Boston, MA 02115. For contacts in your area, request the Directory of Bisexual Groups. ▼

BISEXUALITY
A National Newsletter

For info,
send SASE to:
Gibbon Publications
P.O. Box 20917
Long Beach, CA 90801-3917

NAMBN, from page 4

responsible for the phone and P.O. Box are as yet undecided. Cianna made a final report to the closing assembly.

So finally, as the result of much work, and amid some pains and much rejoicing, an umbrella network has been formed. I hope it will be a means by which we can all feel more connected, that it will help us to empower ourselves and each other, and that it will maintain its grassroots character. I know some people fear that such an organization will accrue power to itself, that it will be a means by which individuals can take more control than they should. But I have faith in the tendency I have observed among bisexuals not to allow anyone to dictate to them, not even another bisexual. The North American Multicultural Bisexual Network will be what we, the individual and group members, make it. ▼

Famous
Switch-hitters
continued

12. Jane Bowles,
1917-1973, U.S.

A novelist herself, Bowles was married to the author Paul Bowles. She spent much of her life in Mexico, Spain, France and Morocco. Her reputation as one of the finest modern writers rests entirely on one novel, one play and a handful of short stories. She is said to have died from the effects of "witch-craft" and alcohol during a fast for Ramadan.

13. Billie Holiday,
1915-1959, U.S.

Though basically heterosexual, in her biography, *Lady Sings the Blues*, Holiday described her lesbian experiences in prison, where a lesbian matron helped her survive. Holiday also talked about a close relationship with a wealthy white lesbian.



Gay Games, from page 1

political, able-bodied, gay male athletes. I wished I had stayed home.

One woman in a wheelchair called Vancouver "the city from Hell," in reference to its inaccessibility. At one event, a black woman performer looked out at the crowd and commented "Wow, I've never seen so many white faces!"

Woman-only space was hard to find. A night of entertainment by women called Women All Night Long seemed to me to be heavily populated by men. I love men, but I was very much looking forward to a women's party. Fortunately, I found a Womyn's Coffee House, "a smoke- and alcohol-free nightly space for women" about two miles from downtown, in a rather obscure and dangerous part of town. If I had not rented a car (in other words, if had not been of a high economic class), I probably would not have been able to attend.

I also had a sense that the event taking place in an enormous closet. Women All Night Long was reported to be originally called The Biggest Lesbian Party Ever, but the name was considered to be too exclusive (of males or of non-lesbian women, I'm not sure which). I know I am not alone in the belief that the organizers were not so concerned with exclusion as they were queazy about using the "L" word. The entire event was most often publicly referred to as the benign *Celebration '90* rather than *Gay Games*. The Queers in Art market was renamed the *Artisans' Market*, resulting in some protests by the Queers in Art Committee. And as for *Bisexual*, I began to think they had never heard the word before. Official programs, guidebooks, posters, local gay community papers – no "B" word. I attended Opening Ceremonies and Closing Ceremonies, heard

speech after speech, and only one person – Svend Robinson, an openly-gay Minister of Parliament – included me in his speech. Incidentally, he also included women, people of color, Native people and physically-challenged individuals in his list of oppressed people. He seemed to be the only one to understand the need to relate homophobic oppression with all other oppressions.

By midweek I had decided to act. I made up a small poster: "BISEXUALS! Do you feel as invisible as I do? Lets meet for brunch on Saturday, 10 a.m. at Cafe Luxy. Or am I the only bisexual here?..." I posted only two, in prominent places. Saturday morning I stood outside the cafe at 9:50 a.m., waiting. At exactly 10 o'clock I felt very alone. I was harassed by a holy-roller-type who saw my sign. As I stood there, stunned by the harassment, a smiling man in a Bisexual Pride t-shirt walked up to me from one direction, and another shy-looking man came from another direction. I suddenly felt a flood of relief, and was so glad I had put up the signs. We went into the cafe, and, over breakfast, talked about our homes (Vancouver and Australia for them, Boston for me), the Games, the weather. Then, finally, ourselves and our lives. Married. Divorced. Never married. In a triad. Monogamous. In love. Celibate. In the gay community. In the bi community. Isolated, with no community.

We exchanged stories, feelings, hopes and fears. We promised to keep in touch, and we parted.

Sometimes I wonder why I persist in considering myself to be a part of the gay community. Gay Games had me wondering again. But meeting just two other bisexual people brought the reasons back. *I am* the gay community. Every bisexual person has something to gain from and something to give to the gay community. We learn from each other, and we are a part of each other. The bi community is loaded with people who formerly identified as homosexual. The gay community is full of people who once identified as bisexual – even if some of those people have trivialized that part of their lives by calling it a phase, or, worse, a lie. My visibility as a bisexual in the gay community may help some gay-identified people embrace, rather than fear, their own bisexuality. ▼

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books, books,

The International Directory of Bisexual Organizations is available for \$2 from the BBWN Office, 338 Newbury Street, 202C, Boston, MA 02115.

Some Books on Bisexuality Introduced at the Bi Conference:

(These are not book reviews, but are descriptions taken directly from press releases.)

Bi Any Other Name: Bisexual People Speak Out

Edited by Lani Kaahumanu and Loraine Hutchins

Alyson Publications, 40 Plympton Street, Boston, MA 02118

Hear the voices of over seventy bisexual women and men describe their lives. This groundbreaking feminist anthology is an important step in recognizing that bisexuals are a part of, and apart from, the lesbian, gay, and heterosexual communities.

Bisexual people of all colors tell their stories – personal, political, spiritual, historical – in prose, poetry and essays. The range of their experience is astounding: single and married; gay, lesbian, and feminist-identified; monogamous and non-monogamous; people with HIV; parents and grandparents; sex radicals and swingers. These are individuals who have fought prejudice from both the gay and straight communities and who have begun only recently to share their experiences.

The editors, Lani Kaahumanu and Loraine Hutchins, are active feminists, writers and bisexual organizers in their own communities of San Francisco and Washington, D.C. Kaahumanu has been a producer and community activist. Hutchins has worked as a counselor and administrator with runaway youth.

Bi Any Other Name will be published in November, 1990.

Bisexuality: A Reader and Sourcebook

Edited by Thomas Geller

Times Change Press, P.O. Box 2510, Novato, CA 94948

Anyone interested in bisexuality for any reason will find good reading here: personal experiences, philosophical musings, academic studies, a song (with score), a "bi-lexicon" . . .

The editor is Thomas Geller, composition student and freelance performer, who lives in prudish Cincinnati. He has been active in bisexual and gay communities since taking part in the 1987 National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights.

Call for entries:

The Bisexual Feminist

Essays on feminism and sexual orientation

The Seal Press, Seattle, 1992

Edited by Elizabeth Reba Weise

Essays are currently being solicited for an anthology on the feminist analysis of bisexuality to be published by The Seal Press of Seattle in the fall of 1992. We especially encourage women of color to write for this anthology.

Elizabeth Reba Weise, a bisexual activist and the editor of *North Bi Northwest*, the newsletter of the Seattle Bisexual Women's Network, will edit the collection. We are open to suggestions for possible chapters. Some specific topics we are seeking essays on include: Bisexuality in the Afro-American community; bisexuality in the Hispanic community; an analysis of the nature vs. nurture vs. choice argument; interviews with women active in the feminist and lesbian movements pre-80s on attitudes towards bisexuality, and how these attitudes changed over time; the demand for sexual purity within the lesbian feminist movement; separatism and bisexuality; a history of famous bisexual women in history; is there a difference in sexual attraction towards women and towards men? bisexuals and AIDS; non-compulsory heterosexuality; being with men by choice; bisexuality in other cultures worldwide. For more information, contact Elizabeth Reba Weise c/o The Seattle Bisexual Women's Network, P.O. Box 30645, Greenwood Station, Seattle, WA 98103-0645

Coming in the December/January issue of BiWomen:

A book review of Marge Piercy's *Summer People!*

BiWomen

Visual Art Show

Dancin' With the Girls: Loud watercolors of women dancing together by Liz Nania. October 1 through November 1 at Indigo, 823 Main Street, Cambridge, Mass. Call (617) 497-7200 for days and hours.



Welcome back, *Stephanie B.*, from your trip to Australia!!!



And welcome back, *Ann G.*, from your trip all over the U.S.!!!



And welcome back, *Robyn O.*, from your trip to the U.K.!!!



Bi Women hopes you all are going to write wonderful stories about your adventures all over the world...

NO COMMENT:

The following gem appeared in *Newsweek* in March of this year:

A Walk on the Bisexual Side

Even while Noriega's power was growing, the bisexual side of his personality began to emerge more openly, still concealed by the macho image he was carefully cultivating. The macho officer, proficient in judo and parachuting, would perfume himself heavily on off hours and wear yellow jump suits with yellow shoes, travel the world with a male pal with whom he was widely rumored to be having a torrid affair, and surround himself with openly gay ambassadors and advisers.

One friend of Noriega's says he liked homosexual advisers because they were easier to blackmail, but one of his gay advisers explains the attraction otherwise - "he is a spiritual and soft man and likes to be around spiritual and soft people." Noriega would joke to this friend, however, that the only Panamanians without balls were the men - "the queers and the women are the only courageous ones," he would say. Armchair psychiatrists credit Noriega's sexual confusion to his gay brother, Luis Carlos Noriega, the only person Noriega ever trusted completely.

Oct./Nov./Dec. Birthdays: Robyn O., Lani K., Chris C., David T., Lisa C., Nancy K., Charman B., Marge L., Cliff A., Laura S., Alan H., Melanie S., Marjorie B.

HOUSEMATE WANTED

BiF, 44 (Bohemian before and since the 60s) into animals & poetry as much as into S/M (I'm radical but discreet and quiet), needs open, independent person to share rent. If you love cats & other fauna, you'll love this duplex on its dead-end street near the trolley in suburban Brighton near Boston College.

You'd have your own room and use of one of two baths; you would need your own phone. There's central AC, dishwasher, porch, bkyd., parking. One or two more cats would be welcome; no tobacco please. \$310/mo. plus util. Call Joanna at (617) 787-3475 after 10am and before 10pm.

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 Matron Saint (WOW!): \$100

Send this form along with your check to:

BBWN

338 Newbury Street, 202C
Boston, MA 02115

CALENDAR

Ongoing Events:



First Sunday of the month:

Bi Space. 8pm. A place for all bisexual people to come together and meet and talk about bisexual issues. No agenda or set topic, just a friendly space for whatever develops. \$2 donation requested. Sponsored by the East Coast Bisexual Network. At the Center. Call (617) 247-6683 for more info.



Sundays:

Alateen Group open to bisexual, lesbian and gay youth 22 and under who are affected by alcoholism in a family member or a close friend. 6pm. At the Center.



Tuesdays:

Bisexual Women's Rap Group. 7:30pm-10pm at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant Street, Central Square, Cambridge, MA. All women welcome. Call (617) 354-6658 for more info.



Wednesdays

Bisexual Children of Alcoholics. 7:30pm. An Al-Anon meeting for bisexual children of alcoholics. Mass. General Hospital, lower amphitheater (next to the emergency room entrance), Boston, MA. Call Marge at (617) 259-1559 for more info.

October 1 • Monday

BBWN Introductory Meeting. 7:30pm, Women's Ctr., 46 Pleasant Street, Cambridge, Mass. All women welcome.

October 4 • Thursday

The Lesbian and Gay Community Center's First Birthday Party! At the Center, of course, 5:30-9pm. \$10 donation requested. Volunteers needed – a great opportunity for increased bi visibility at the Center! Info: (617) 247-2927.

October 5-8 • Friday-Monday

I Am Your Sister: Forging Global Connections Across Differences. Conference celebrating Audre Lorde and her work. Poetry, fiction, international food, dancing. Info: (617) 424-6791.

October 7 • Sunday

Bi Space. See Ongoing Events column.



October 12 • Friday

Lesbian/Gay/Bi Swing & Ballroom Dance, 8:15pm-midnight. Swing lesson 8:15-9pm. Dance the night away to the fabulous sounds of Cheek to Cheek, Boston's Lesbian and Gay Swing Orchestra. Smoke/alcohol-free. Beginners welcome. \$5. At the Old Cambridge Baptist Church in Harvard Square. Info: (617) 661-1792.

October 18 • Thursday

Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Speakers Bureau meeting. 7pm-9pm at The Center. Info: (617) 354-0133.

October 20 • Saturday

BBWN/BBMN Monthly Brunch. At the Modern Times Cafe, 134 Hampshire Street, Cambridge. Meet outside at 10:45am. Info: (617) BIS-MOVE.

Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Speakers Bureau regular training for new members. \$20 members, \$25 non-members (includes training manual). 9am-5pm at the Center. Info: (617) 354-0133.

October 21 • Sunday

Canoeing with W.O.W. (Way Out in Waltham, Watch City's Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Group). Info: Jennifer at (617) 893-0391.

October 26-28 • Friday-Sunday

4th Annual Lesbian, Bisexual & Gay Studies Conference. Speakers and workshops in all areas of lesbian, bisexual and gay studies. Info: Arthur Lipkin, (617) 547-2197.

October 29 • Monday

BBWN Non-newsletter Volunteer Night, and "Pop and Crisps" Reception. 7pm-10pm at The Center. Get a private tour of the Lesbian and Gay Community Center. Open to ALL members of BBWN. Schmooze and socialize. Come on and check it out! 338 Newbury Street,

2nd floor. Auditorium stop on the MBTA Green Line. Volunteers needed for decorating, clean-up, and munchies. Please call (617) BIS-MOVE.

November 2 • Friday

Lesbian/Gay/Bi Swing & Ballroom Dance. See Oct. 12. Free swing & foxtrot lessons.

November 4 • Sunday

Bi Space. See Ongoing Events column.

November 8 • Thursday

BiWomen Newsletter production night. Bring in your submissions, learn to use the computer, offer advice and opinions on content and layout, or just witness the magic of desktop publishing. 6-8pm at the BBWN office at the Center. Info: Kathy at (617) 424-7025.

November 9 • Friday

BiWomen Calendar Deadline. Submissions: Kathy at (617) 424-7025.

November 11 • Sunday

W.O.W. (see Oct. 21) slideshoe of a hike through the Appalachian Trail. Info: Jennifer at (617) 893-0391.

November 15 • Thursday

Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Speakers Bureau meeting. 7pm-9pm at The Center. Info: (617) 354-0133.

November 17 • Saturday

BBWN/BBMN Monthly Brunch. At Montilio's, 549 Boylston Street (Copley Square), Boston. Meet outside the front door at 10:45am. Info: (617) BIS-MOVE.

Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Speakers Bureau special training for veteran speakers and people who have completed the beginner's training (see Oct. 20). \$15. 9am-5pm at the Center. Info: (617) 354-0133.

November 19 • Monday

The Seven-Year Itch! See page 2 for details.

November 26 • Monday

BBWN Volunteer Night to stuff the Dec./Jan. issue. Not only that, but it's Laura S.'s Bi-rthday! Come celebrate! 6pm-10pm. At The Center. Info: BIS-MOVE.

November 30 • Friday

Lesbian/Gay/Bi Swing & Ballroom Dance. See Oct. 12. Free swing & waltz lessons.

December 2 • Sunday

Bi Space. See Ongoing Events column.

December 3 • Monday

BBWN Introductory Meeting. 7:30pm, Women's Ctr., 46 Pleasant Street, Cambridge, Mass. All women welcome.



THE CENTER

is the Lesbian and Gay Community Center, 338 Newbury Street, Suite 202C, Boston, MA 02115.

We're terribly sorry about last issue's WARNING! It was supposed to be just a friendly reminder to renew. But now it really is your last chance. (Remember - if you joined mid-year, you can pro-rate your dues!)

WARNING: LAST CHANCE TO RENEW YOUR BBWN MEMBERSHIP

(If you have joined or renewed since 7/1/90, please disregard this warning.)

Thanks!

Name: _____

Address: _____
number & street

_____ city & state _____ zip

Phone: (____) _____ If we call you, do we need
to use discretion? Yes No

Please check one:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Goddess-in-training: \$25 | <input type="checkbox"/> Regular Membership: \$16 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Matron Saint: more than \$50 | <input type="checkbox"/> Goddess: \$50 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Low income: \$7-15 | <input type="checkbox"/> WOW: \$100 or more |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> No income: \$0-6 |

Make checks payable to BBWN, & mail to BBWN, 338 Newbury St., Suite 202, Boston 02115.
Note: Our mailing list is kept strictly confidential and is NEVER given or sold outside BBWN.
Newsletters are mailed in a discrete security envelope.

I may be interested in helping with the following. Please contact me.

- Newsletter (editing, typing, writing, layout, etc. Please submit articles, poetry, etc.)
- VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR (call people who have indicated interest in volunteering and match them with work that needs doing. About 2 hours of phone calling/month).
***** WE URGENTLY NEED SOMEONE TO TAKE ON THIS WORK *****
- Volunteer night (newsletter mailing and other projects)
- Mail coordination (picking up mail from our Porter Sq. P.O. box & bring it to Center)
- Telephone (volunteering to check our phone line and return calls for a month or so)
- Mailing List Coordinator (maintaining our mailing list on a computer and printing out labels for newsletter mailings)
- Social events (helping to organize a dance, brunch, potluck, fundraiser, etc.)
- Staffing our office one evening per month (telephone, filing, correspondence)
- Meeting Facilitation (co-facilitating introductory or general meetings)
- Speakers Bureau (speaking to gay/lesbian groups, college classes, etc.)
- BiCEP (Bisexual Committee Engaging in Politics)

BOSTON BISEXUAL WOMEN'S NETWORK

(617) BIS-MOVE

Office: at Gay & Lesbian Services Center, 338 Newbury St., Boston 02116

Founded in 1983, and with a mailing list several hundred strong, the BBWN is a not-for-profit group open to women of all sexual orientations. Its purpose is to provide education, support and community to bisexual women and others. BBWN is a volunteer organization. It has no paid staff, and no hierarchy of authority. Decisions are made collectively by all interested, and new members are encouraged to get involved. BBWN offers a number of services and activities, some of which are described below.

NEWSLETTER

Bi Women is published bi-monthly (6x/year). The newsletter is a compilation of articles, calendar, letters, classified ads, and other information of interest to bi women and our friends. (A sample issue is enclosed.) A file of back issues of the newsletters is available in our office and at the Women's Center in Cambridge.

INTRODUCTORY MEETINGS

Come find out about BBWN. Intros are held at the Women's Center in Cambridge on even numbered months (usually on the 1st Monday), and are open to all women.

SUPPORT GROUPS

Many ongoing support groups meet regularly to discuss personal, theoretical and political issues of bisexuality. Interested new members are organized into support groups at the Intro meetings; thereafter they may decide on location, time, focus and frequency of meetings.

SOCIAL EVENTS

BBWN sponsors a number of events annually, from parties and potlucks to a retreat and a conference. All women are welcome, and sometimes men. If you are interested in sponsoring a potluck, party, etc., let us know.

ORGANIZATION

BBWN is a non-hierarchical collective. All decisions are made at **Coordinating Committee** meetings, held several times each year. All women are encouraged to attend. (See our newsletter calendar for dates.)

BBWN relies entirely on volunteers to operate. There is a **Volunteer Night** held on the last Monday of each month (except December). All women are encouraged to join us. At **Volunteer Night** you can spend the evening hanging out with other wonderful women, and also help BBWN. There are many other ways to help out. Other ongoing jobs include: mailing list coordinator, treasurer, mail coordinator, picking up and returning telephone calls from our answering machine, working on the newsletter, etc. (See other side of this page)

MEMBERSHIP

Membership dues and donations are our only source of income. The membership year extends from 9/1 through 8/31. Membership rates are listed on the other side of this page. (If joining mid-year, you may pro-rate your dues.)

OTHER

Archives, Speakers' Bureau, BICEP (Bisexual Committee Engaging in Politics), **Monthly Dim-Sum Brunch** (with men's network)... and more.

December 1990/January 1991

Vol. 8 No. 6



Bi Women

The Newsletter of the Boston Bisexual Women's Network



Jean Kropper 1990

INSIDE

BBWN News	2
Letters	3
Lesbian Herstory Archives	7
Mythbusters #5	9
Books	10
etcetera	11
Calendar	12

The Fourth Annual Lesbian, Bisexual and Gay Studies Conference

A Call for Papers and a Call for Action

by Robyn Ochs and Pam Ellis

The Fourth Annual Lesbian, Bisexual and Gay Studies Conference was held at Harvard over the October 26-28 weekend. It was a resounding success. Over 1,500 people attended, far exceeding the expectations of organizers, who had planned for 500-800 attendees.

The theme of this year's conference was "Pleasure and Politics," and drew a wide assortment of academics and activists. A majority were from the east coast, but people came from all over the U.S., and from other

LBG Studies continued on page 4

Bisexuels Stand Up to Be Counted

The following are excerpts from an article by Susan George published in a British gay/lesbian/bisexual weekly, The Pink Paper (issue 142, week ending 29 September 1990).

Just in case there was any doubt, the Eighth National Bisexual Conference held in Edinburgh [Scotland] on 7-10 September showed once and for all that bisexuals are out, proud, and here to stay!

One hundred and fifty bisexual-identified people, with a wide variety of lifestyles, politics, "orientations" and backgrounds, braved religious pickets to discuss everything from "The Variables of Sexual Orientation" to "Fucked-up Sexuality in Advanced Capitalist Societies."

This conference was made particularly exciting through the ideas of bisexual activists who went to San Francisco for the First United States National Conference this year. A number of Americans also made the trip to Edinburgh, including noted psychiatrist Fritz Klein, who developed the Klein Sexual Orientation Grid – an extension of the Kinsey scale.

Speakers at the "Working with Lesbian and Gay Organisations" workshop, which included representatives of the Scottish Homosexual Rights Group, Edinburgh Gay Switchboard, and the International Lesbian and Gay Organisation, were adamant that their groups welcomed bisexuals. The Labour Campaign for Lesbian and Gay Rights, however, is more equivocal.

All groups recognised that, whether or not they had "out" bisexuals working for them, many people who publicly identified as lesbian or gay were, in feelings and sexual activity, bisexual.

The interests of lesbians, gay men, and bisexual people of both sexes are not identical but we also need to work in coalition with each

Stand Up continued on page 8

BBWN News

Honor Roll

◆
Nina C.
Charnan B.
Gail Z.
Ann G.
Bobbi K.
Susan C.
Kathleen H.
Rebecca G.
Heidi F.
Sharon G.
Claire M.
Stephanie B.
Pam E.
Laura S.
Sue S.
Robyn O.
Marcia D.
Naomi H.
Michelle H.
Pam L.

BiWomen is published bi-monthly, of course.

Editor:
Kathleen Hepburn

Typists:
Rebecca Gorlin, Kathleen Hepburn, Sue Schiefelbein

Contributors:
Women from all over the world! If you keep this up, we just might become a monthly newsletter! Thanks for all the clippings, art, letters, poetry, ads, support . . . if something you sent doesn't appear in this issue, don't worry; you'll probably see it in an upcoming issue.

Announcing: "Bi-Fest '91!"

Do you like to dance? Eat great food? Socialize and community-build until the cows come home? Well, that's what we're planning to do the weekend of Gay Pride in Boston, Mass., June 8, 1991.

To make this happenin' event happen, we need y'all to appear at the first organizing meeting December 10, 7-9 p.m. at the Lesbian and Gay Community Center, 338 Newbury Street, 2nd floor, Boston, Mass.

Not to break any hearts, but since we realized that there's not enough time to organize a full-fledged conference, we decided to be festive and boogie instead (and be a larger presence at Gay Pride - Yeah Rah!). So, if this is your cup of cocoa, please help us build Bi visibility in Boston, 1991. See ya at the meeting - love to all!

- Laura S.

Advertise in BiWomen!

For only \$10 per issue, your message will reach over 700 subscribers. Save \$5 and advertise in three issues for \$25. Send your business-card sized ad and a check to:
BiWomen, c/o BBWN
338 Newbury Street, 202C
Boston, MA 02115

Such a deal!

The Boston Bisexual Women's Network is a feminist, not-for-profit collective organization whose purpose is to bring women together for support and validation. It is meant to be a safe environment in which women of all sexual self-identities, class backgrounds, racial, ethnic and religious groups, ages, abilities and disabilities are welcome. Through the vehicles of discussion, support, education, outreach, political action and social groups related to bisexuality, we are committed to the goals of full acceptance as bisexuals within the gay and lesbian community, and to full acceptance of bisexuality and the liberation of all gay people within the larger society.

Typists needed!

For the newsletter in the first week of January.

Call Kathy at
(617) 666-8991 to volunteer.

Conference on Video

The 1990 National Bisexual Conference's general assemblies and various workshops were videotaped and are in the process of being edited down. The masters will be archived through BiPOL. Edited versions will be obtainable later at a cost to be determined by the conference organizers, c/o BiPOL, 584 Castro Street #422, San Francisco, CA 94114.

(Reported in *Bisexuality*, August 1990 © Gibbon Publications, P.O. Box 20917, Long Beach CA 90801-3917)

International Directory of Bisexual Groups Available

The updated January 1991 International Directory of Bisexual Groups is now available from the East Coast Bisexual Network. Send \$3.50 and SASE to ECBN, c/o Lesbian and Gay Community Center, 338 Newbury Street, Boston, MA 02115.



DEADLINE for the Feb./March issue:
Friday, January 12 at noon.

All submissions in writing, please, and include a name and phone number. Send articles, calendar entries, letters, art, news and views to:

BiWomen, BBWN
338 Newbury Street, 202C
Boston, MA 02115

Letters

*
Remember our address:

BiWomen

BBWN

338 Newbury Street, 202C

Boston, MA 02115

*

Staffers are needed for the Lesbian and Gay Community Center. If you are interested, please call Michael Goldrosen, the Center's manager, at (617) 247-2927.

Dear BBWN/BBMN Co-members,
Greetings from Tejas! I am organizing a mixed bisexual network, "BiNet", P.O. Box 117574, Carrollton, TX 75011-7574 (all you other Texas people out there on this mailing list = WRITE! and everyone else, too!) It is

an exciting time for Tejas. This is the first official bisexual network in Texas. There are a few small male-/female-only support groups but no real networks — not until now, anyway.

We will be celebrating the network kick-off with a picnic and introductory meeting. Bi Net has received very good publicity from the local entertainment guide and the gay papers as well.

Bi Net has received approximately 30 responses, mostly from men, however some of the women from the local bi-women's support group will be joining us and a group of lesbian women who are interested in bridging the gap between bi's and gays have expressed an interest in attending. I met one of the women previously at a Bi-Link (women's support group) event and she is very serious about closing the gap. Nice to see. Hopefully, as the network becomes well known, many more women will participate.

From this and the fact that BiNet has been extended a written invitation to participate in Dallas' gay pride event — I would say that Bisexuality is more accepted within the gay community than most people tend to think. I have also been informed that it is better to be bisexuality the straight community here than it is to be gay — Why can't we all just be who we are and it not be any better or worse?

Other news:

I happened upon a wonderful workshop last week at a Unitarian Retreat entitled "Sexual Minorities" of which I attended two sessions — one on whether "the Unitarian congregations" were welcoming of lesbian, gay and bisexual people and another on the "Spectrum of Bisexuality", the second of which was led by a beautiful bisexual school teacher. Also at the conference was a lesbian, gay and bisexual social evening and plans for a caucus in Dallas in September to decide the name and purpose of a new district Unitarian group for lesbian, gay and bisexual concerns. It was so nice to see such positive bi-visibility! I will definitely be attending the caucus to be sure the bisexuals are included in the name! You guys know me — I never give up! However, since the majority of the people on the committee are bisexual — I don't foresee it being as big an issue as it was on the Pride Committee in Boston. What's happenin with that anyway or do I dare ask?

In addition to the two items above, the network and the planning committee, both which are bisexual oriented, I am also working on the Governor's campaign for the Carrollton Democrats — not that I'm necessarily for any one candidate on the democratic ballot — it's just better that the best person for our overall interest win in all areas — especially in Tejas! — so I am also into the political campaign for the good of Bisexuals and Gays everywhere!

It was great to see everyone in San Francisco — I look forward to the next conference with great anticipation. It was so hard to spread our time out equally among everyone we wanted to spend time with because there were so many of us there, but please know I loved seeing you all, even if only for a brief moment!

May love, Hugs, and Peace Be With Us All,

Sharla Clos
1948 Westminster
Carrollton, TX 75007

P.S. Drop me a line — I would love to hear from you all!

Eagerly awaiting our next visits!



Dear BiWomen,

After reading your very articulate newsletter for several years and having been to a conference and a retreat, I feel I must write.

Many of you may remember me, and wonder what happened. I left my husband in August, 1989, after a tumultuous marriage. During my marriage I identified as bisexual for at least three years.

However, every time I went to a bisexual event, I was besieged by men, and — no offense, guys — I was unhappy with that attention. I was very much interested in understanding my love for women.

What I realized later, after leaving my husband, was that my first love is women. I'm much happier identifying as a lesbian.

That's not to say I harbor any animosity for bisexuals. On the contrary. I am not ashamed to admit that I identified as a bisexual, nor do I say it was "just a phase".

I also accept, to the best of my ability, that my current lover may be bisexual. (She's not sure of anything right now — except that she loves me.)

I must admit, when she says that she wants to date men ... all I do is cry. Then I say: "O.K., but don't tell me. I don't want to know." (I've always dated in a serially monogamous fashion — that's how I accept her bisexuality. Me, 100+ years; after me, ???)

Guess I really don't like sharing, very unlike

Letters continued on next page



A note from
Ron Fox, M.A.:
"Dear BiWomen
and BBWN:

I am writing to express my appreciation to you regarding your mailing my bisexuality study questionnaire to your members and readers. There has been a very good response to my outreach efforts from people who received the questionnaire through BiWomen and other bisexual groups nationwide.

A note in the next issue of BiWomen encouraging readers to keep on sending in completed questionnaires would be greatly appreciated."

So, send in those completed questionnaires, folks! It's not too late!

Letters, from previous page

my marital situation. I realize now an open marriage was a means to an end: within the confines of marriage, it allowed me to explore my feelings for women.

However, I've been actively married for nine years; my lover has never been married. It seems ludicrous to me to corral her in when she hasn't experienced much of life yet. I've been married. I know what I want, and need, now.

So, we've decided not to fully commit to each other yet.

But, I must admit, I'll be hurt to the quick if she runs off and gets married.

That's the story, BiWomen!

In sisterhood,

Michele Dupey

P.S. If you take my life as a continuum, the first half (36 years) I lived as a heterosexual, and the second half (37 years and onward) I live as a lesbian, so what is the sum total of my life: A Bisexual! Who said I couldn't do math?!



Hello!

Yours is the most exciting, interesting, pretty bi newsletter I've ever subscribed to, and I look forward to another year of bimonthly mailbox joy. (I also appreciate the occasional coverage of Western Mass. happenings – how I long to be back in the Happy Valley.)

Here in Champaign-Urbana, Illinois, a new bi network is born! It started as a support group, but we're getting together for social wing-dings, too. I lived here over a year before I heard anyone mention the b-word, so it's quite an accomplishment to have a group with a phone list and mailing address. Here's the address (in case any of your readership is in downstate Illinois):

Champaign-Urbana Bisexual Network
c/o McKinley Foundation
809 South Fifth Street
Champaign, IL 61820

Thanks to you all for your commitment to bi pride and community-developing.

Yours,
M. Lynne Murphy

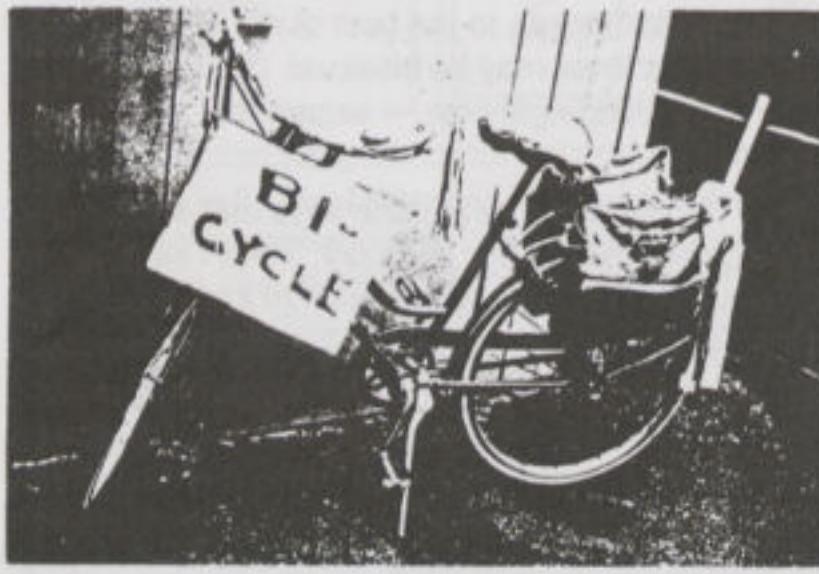


Photo by Marcia Deihl.

LBG Studies, from page 1

countries as well. More than 200 people presented papers, moderated panels, ran workshops, or made artistic presentations. Dozens of workshops ranged from the esoteric to the pragmatic, from "Representations of Same-Sex Love Between Women in Greek and Roman Religion," to "Don't Ever Rub Another Man's Rhubarb: The Homoerotics and Homophobia of Batman," to "Patriarchs, Politics and Power: Whose Gay Studies Is It?," to "Women, AIDS and Activism."

Friday evening's program featured Marlon Riggs, a filmmaker from San Francisco whose latest film, *Tongues Untied*, addresses the experience of black gay men in American society. His talk was brilliant and unifying, leaving the overflow crowd visibly moved. His talk was followed by a showing of *Tongues Untied*, which was even more powerful than his talk.

Saturday evening's keynote address, entitled "Jesse Helms and Your Tax Dollars," was given by Professor Catherine Stimpson, president of the Modern Language Association and an outspoken anti-censorship activist. Stimpson chronicled the adventures of Jesse Helms in his tireless quest to stifle freedom of expression and to impose his values on the rest of us, and exhorted all of us to work toward getting his opponent, Harvey Gantt, elected in November's Senatorial election. (Postscript: This, unfortunately, did not come to pass.)

Actually, this was not the fourth but the first Lesbian, Bisexual and Gay Studies Conference. The first three conferences, all held at Yale University, were "Lesbian and Gay Studies" conferences. And next year's conference, which will be held at Rutgers University, has already been named "The Fifth Lesbian and Gay Studies Conference."

And how bisexual was this year's conference, anyway? Out of about 50 panels and workshops with more than 160 presenters, the only scheduled event dedicated exclusively to bisexual issues was a post-plenary caucus called "Action Bi Academics: Next Step for Bisexuals in the Community." In addition, two papers addressed bisexual issues. As part of a panel entitled "Building Identities Against Homophobia and Biphobia," Amanda Udis-Kessler read an excellent paper, *Present Tense: Biphobia As a Crisis of Meaning*, in which she discussed the discomfort and denial that both heterosexuals and gay/lesbian people alike feel toward the concept of bisexuality, saying that to accept the existence of bisexuals challenges the essentialist perspective ("that's just the way some people ARE") that much of the gay movement has used to argue for gay/lesbian civil rights. [Those interested can read this paper in Tom Geller's book, *Bisexuality: A Sourcebook and*

LBG Studies continued on next page

Volunteers are needed to help organize a celebration of the Women's Center's 20th Anniversary. The Women's Center is located at 46 Pleasant Street in Cambridge, Mass. BBWN has been holding introductory meetings there for some time now. If you are interested and/or have some suggestions about what kind of event to have, please call Judy at (617) 354-8807.

◆

Oh yes you called
in the middle of the
night
to wrap your loving
arms around my
heart

you said

take me away
I want you
I want you

woman
I am affirming
your love

oh yes

woman
I am affirming
your love

10/10/90

Louise Gillette

LBG Studies, from page 1

Reader (Times Change Press).] Another paper was given by Stacey Young of Cornell University on *Bisexuality, Lesbian (and Gay) Community, and the Limits of Identity Politics*. This paper dealt with the 1990 Northampton Pride March's exclusion of bisexuals from the march title as well as from the coordinating committee of the march, and the dialogue that accompanied and followed this controversy. One of the presenters, Chuck Barrigan, identified himself as bisexual in his talk entitled "A Major Mistake: Alternative Approaches to Building Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual Studies," and addressed the importance of the inclusion of bisexuals in lesbian, gay and bisexual studies. On the same panel as Amanda Udis-Kessler was another presentation of relevance to bisexuals. William P. Norris of Oberlin College presented the results of a study on homophobia recently conducted by the college. A statistic of particular interest was that 6 percent of the female students who responded to the questionnaire identified themselves as lesbian, 8 percent as bisexual, 11 percent as undecided, and 75 percent as heterosexual. While I am reasonably confident that Oberlin, due to its strong gay, lesbian and bisexual community and its generally progressive tradition, is not a typical college, this statistic certainly challenges the presumption that bisexuals do not exist.

Amanda Udis-Kessler and Stacey Young wrote and distributed a letter in the registration area which asked why only two papers out of over 125 given were specifically about bisexuality, and asked why there was no outreach to bisexual scholars and the bisexual community beyond changing the name of the conference. The letter proposed that next year's steering committee include at least two bisexuals and that outreach be done to ensure improved bisexual representation in next year's conference program. They also called an impromptu session on Bisexual Studies for early Saturday afternoon. This session, announced in the flyers and by one poster in the registration area, drew 35 people. This meeting was a forum for sharing information about scholarship in the field of bisexual studies, and allowed participants to get to know one another, thereby reducing the isolation and invisibility many of us had been feeling.

One of the last events of the conference was a plenary session for the purpose of, the moderator told us, discussing "the possible formation of a national gay and lesbian studies association," along the model of other professional academic associations. Interestingly, while the exclusion of bisexuals from this original proposal was never addressed, the inclusive language used by some of the people who spoke on the topic during this forum, and the fact that the woman who later made the

motion to form the association used the words "gay, lesbian and bisexual," resulted in a unanimous vote to work toward the formation of an international gay, lesbian and bisexual studies association.

The end of the conference was dedicated to caucus time. The bisexual caucus, co-facilitated by Pam Ellis and Robyn Ochs, and entitled "Action Bi Academics: Next Step for Bisexuals in the Community" was attended by approximately 20 dedicated individuals (it did not begin until 4:30 p.m., and many conference participants had long drives ahead of them and jobs the next day). The purpose of this meeting was two-fold: to process what the conference had been like for us as bisexual participants, and to strategize about the next steps that would have to be taken in order to make next year's conference more inclusive than this year's. At the end of two hours, we emerged with some concrete strategies: We agreed to write an open letter to bisexual people and our allies explaining what was happening, urging people writing on the topic of bisexuality to submit papers to next year's conference organizers, and encouraging bisexual people and our allies to lobby next year's organizers for the inclusion of bisexual people in both the title and the substance of the conference. This letter and a copy of the call for papers will be inserted into the mailing of the November update of the *International Directory of Bisexual Groups*. In addition, everyone who had attended either of the two bisexual meetings would be sent a copy of the address and phone list we had created. This article is being sent to all bisexual newsletters in the hope that it will be printed.

A few of the bisexual people present at the conference took it upon ourselves to ask next year's organizers why they had decided not to use the "b-word" and to find out whether there is any chance of having it added. We have been told by the conference organizers at Rutgers that the decision to exclude "bisexual" from the title was unanimous among organizing committee members and that their intention in taking this action was, in fact, to be *more* inclusive. Seems a little counter-intuitive to you, too? Well, it sure seemed that way to us. Ever the polite bisexuals, we graciously asked the organizing committee to set forth the major points that, at least in their minds, justified the exclusion.

The thinking, it seems, is as follows:

- The post-Stonewall categories "lesbian and gay" refer to a wide range of practices, which includes bisexuality. It then follows that the category "bisexual" is unnecessary since it is included within the categories "lesbian and gay." In addition, it appears that the inclusion of the term "bisexual" implies that lesbians and

LBG Studies continued on next page

▼
BiWomen needs
you!

Express yourself:

SKETCHES

POETRY

WRITINGS

THOUGHTS

Send them to

BiWomen
BBWN

338 Newbury Street,
202C
Boston, MA 02115



Rosanne Beaurivage
Massage Therapist
AMTA Certified

Allston, MA
(617) 782-8397

LGB Studies, from previous page

gay men are "monosexual." The overall justification here appears to be the need for an "economical" language that will represent our entire community. Bisexuals are just one of the many minority groups within the gay/lesbian community. If the b-word is added, then a floodgate will be opened and everyone – transgender people, tranvestites, s/m people, etc. – will want to be included as well.

- "Lesbian" and "gay" are both political identities and come from the language of culture and politics. As one of the organizing committee members stated, the term "bisexual" is an "unfortunate one," because it, on the other hand, comes from the language of "medicine and science." The conference isn't called the "homosexual" studies conference because it seeks to move away from the very discourses which have been used to oppress. Therefore, to add the word "bisexual" to the name of the conference would depoliticize the event. (Does this bring back memories of Northampton 1990 to you, too?)

- Who did Harvard think it was, anyway, unilaterally deciding to use the b-word?

Our responses to these prepositions is that, due to the history of exclusion of bisexuals and the denial by many people of our very existence, many bisexuals do not necessarily feel included when we see the term "Lesbian/Gay." This is especially true given recent incidents of exclusion in our community. First, the inclusion in 1989 and deliberate exclusion in 1990 of bisexuals at the Northampton Pride March. Second, the fact that Bay Windows, a Boston-area lesbian/gay weekly, refused to print an article about the 1990 Bisexual Conference in

San Francisco because it was, we were told, a "peripheral issue." Third, the act of inclusion of bisexuals one year and their exclusion the next from the title of the conference sends a clear, if not intentional, message that we are not quite welcome. In addition, categorizing all sexual behavior which cannot be categorized as "lesbian and gay" is an oppressive act in language. It is analogous to the use of the "generic he," which many writers tell us includes both men and women, when it effectively keeps women and women's experience invisible, and fails to elucidate the important differences which may exist between groups. This controversy brings back memories of the debates of a decade or so ago when lesbians were arguing for expansion of the term "gay community" to "lesbian and gay community." There was

much opposition to adding the "l-word," opponents argued, because lesbians are already included in the word "gay," and besides, it would make groups' names unnecessarily long and cumbersome.

The next piece of the argument against inclusion presumes that "bisexual" is not a political identity. To behave bisexual does not carry with it an inherently political identity, but neither is it inherently political to behave homosexually. What is political is to IDENTIFY oneself as gay, lesbian, or bisexual.

The question about whether Harvard had the right to add the word bisexual without widespread discussion is less clear. The fact is that the vast majority of Harvard's gay, lesbian and bisexual groups use inclusive language. There was no national organization or procedure established for making this type of decision, which is reflected in the fact that Rutgers was able as well to unilaterally remove "bisexual" from the title. Absent a policy or mechanism for making such decisions, the discussion has to center around what a given planning group deems appropriate. Our issue, therefore, shouldn't be whether Harvard had the right to add the b-word or Rutgers has the right to omit it, but rather what action is just, fair, etc. And our argument is for inclusivity. And while we're arguing for our own inclusion, we need as well to work for inclusion of and outreach to other groups in the gay/lesbian academic community which have historically been excluded: people of color, women, and our writers, activists and thinkers who work outside of academe.

"What can I do to help?" I hear you cry. Well, I'm glad you asked. You can do three things: 1) if you know anyone who writes about bisexuality, encourage them to submit papers to this conference; 2) if you are or have ever been the type of person who might attend an academic gay/lesbian/bisexual studies conference, call or write to the organizers and express your concerns that the word "bisexual" has been omitted from the title of next year's conference; 3) ask your friends, especially gay men and lesbians, to call or write and do the same. It's important that it not just be bisexuals bitching, that it also be lesbians and gay men who believe that bisexuals must be included. The address and telephone number of the 1991 conference is as follows:

Lesbian and Gay Studies Conference #5
att. Monica Dorenkamp or Beryle Chandler
c/o CCAC, Rutgers, The State University
of New Jersey
8 Bishop Place
New Brunswick, NJ 08903

Tel: (908) 932-8678
Fax: (908) 932-8683



BISTORY AT THE LESBIAN HERSTORY ARCHIVES

by [REDACTED]

Hey all you lesbian and bisexual women out there! I want to tell you about a marvellous place and the amazing women behind it, a place where I spent the last three weeks of August doing research, a place in New York called the Lesbian Herstory Archives.

In late July I wrote a letter to Joan Nestle, whose apartment has been the home of the Archives for the past 15 years, asking if I could do research there. I explained that I wanted to read through lesbian and feminist periodicals with the aim of discovering if any openly bisexual women were active in the lesbian and women's movements from the fifties through the eighties, how they expressed themselves, and what the reactions of non-bisexual women towards them were.

My departure date grew near and still I had not heard from her (I did not know at the time how phenomenally busy she is). So I called her up and was quickly put at ease. Could she give me a tour? No problem. When could I have access to the collection? Any weekday between 9 and 5 (and most week-

ends, it turned out); in fact, I could have my own set of keys! Did she feel comfortable with this kind of research being done at the LHA? After all, I'd heard enough horror stories of lesbian exclusionism to be cautious. "It's controversial, so it's important and it needs to be done." I breathed a sigh of relief and anticipation. Let me tell you ladies, the reality was far more impressive and

touching than anything I'd imagined.

First, some herstorical background. The LHA was founded 15 years ago by Deb Edel and Joan Nestle, who were soon joined by Judith Schwarz, and it has been housed in Joan's apartment since its inception. In addition to the usual books, newspapers, magazines and newsletters, the LHA stores posters and artwork, photographs, buttons, t-shirts, dolls, videos, and a variety of other memorabilia. Although the majority of materials are U.S.-based, there is an international collection. The collection fills the floor-to-ceiling shelves on every available wall, and because it is still growing rapidly, the LHA has started a fundraising drive with the goal of buying a permanent home. More on that later.

The Archives is not merely a repository for physical objects – it is a community of dedicated volunteers and of the many women from all over the world who pay visits each year. Volunteers come to a Thursday "work night" to answer messages on the phone machine, file materials, answer letters, and photocopy materials to send out to researchers, writers, teachers and activists all over the world. During the time I was there, women from Japan, England, Scotland, Australia, Germany, Israel and Brazil came to browse and help out. A group of coordinators, which is comprised of the co-founders and half a dozen other women, meets once a month to deal with the nitty-gritty aspects of running the Archives. There are also committees which work on special projects like fundraising or locating a suitable new home for the Archives.

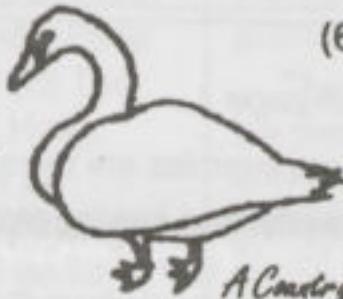
During its first five years, the LHA was supported by donations and through tithing – the founders contributed a percentage of their income to its upkeep. It is now a non-profit organization receiving funding from several foundations and through individual donations. It does not take government money.

I talked with Joan about the principles behind the LHA and her vision of its future. She said that the LHA is dedicated first and foremost to being a lesbian space. When I asked her what she meant by "lesbian" she offered "any woman who has at some time in her life loved another woman." She also remarked that she would rather err on the side of inclusivity than be too exclusive, which explains the large collection of materials relevant to both lesbians and gay men (such as the Gay Community News), feminist materials, and a small but growing collection of materials on bisexuality. For Joan, the mission of the LHA is "to preserve the multiplicity of lesbian presentations." There is something of interest here for any woman

Bistory continued on next page

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"Oh, you mean I'm homosexual! Of course I am, and heterosexual too. But what's that got to do with my headache?"

—Edna St. Vincent Millay in response to her doctor who hinted that her severe headaches might be due to repressed lesbian impulses.

Bistory, from previous page

who identifies herself as a dyke, a feminist, a mother, a butch or a femme, a prostitute, a worker in a traditional or a non-traditional occupation, a practitioner of S&M, a woman of color, a Jew, a witch, a teenager or an older woman, a closeted woman or an activist, a bisexual, an artist, and the list goes on. The sheer amount and variety of the stuff is testimony to the diversity of the lesbian experience and the vitality of lesbian communities.

Naturally, Joan is proud that the LHA has existed for so long and inspires such widespread commitment and support. She hopes it will serve as an inspiration to other communities to start regional archives to preserve more materials, make them more accessible to more people, and reduce the potential for damage if one is destroyed. She has lived with the LHA as a daily presence in her life and home as demanding of her time and energy as any child. As children are wont to do, the LHA is reaching her majority, and it is time for her to move out and find a permanent home.

Joan envisions a Mabel Hampton Research Center on Lesbian Culture, housed in a physically accessible building with room for the collection, gallery and performance spaces, a kitchen, and possibly a caretaker's quarters. By word of mouth alone the LHA has raised \$85,000 towards this goal! I personally (and politically too, for that matter) urge everyone who reads this, lesbian or not, to consider sending a tax-deductible donation to the LHA building fund. Checks can be made out to LHEF, Inc. (Lesbian Herstory Education Foundation, the LHA's non-profit name), and can be mailed to P.O. Box 1258, New York, NY 10116. Classy t-shirts, buttons and refrigerator magnets are also available. The LHA is a unique and valuable resource for all of us. Regardless of how far away we live, we can have access to the collection through the volunteers who work there. It is in all of our best interests to help the LHA "preserve the lives of all women who have had the courage to touch other women."

And here's some good news for the bisexual women out there who want to preserve our heritage and make it available to women visiting a major lesbian archives. The LHA would be willing to house a special collection on Bisexuals and Bisexuality. All we need to do is send in materials designated for the collection; they will be tagged with the unique number assigned to the bi collection and housed with other similar formats. Thus, all books relating to bi issues would be shelved together on the bookshelves, all buttons with bi slogans would be kept together in the button box, all newsletters from bi groups would be filed together in the filing cabinets,

etc. The Seattle Bisexual Women's Network will be sending a small box of materials to start this special collection, and anyone can add to it. Anything from bi women's groups, mixed bi women's and men's groups and individual women is welcome. Bi men's groups should consider sending materials to the National Gay and Lesbian Archives at the Gay and Lesbian Community Center at 1654 N. Hudson Ave., Hollywood CA 90026. I recommend sending a small donation with the materials to help defray the operating costs of the organization which is housing them.

Joan also encourages the bi community to start our own network of archives — her maxim that "no one cares about our story like we do" applies to bisexuals too. I also think it's important to have materials at those gay and lesbian archives that will accept bi-related stuff. So start xeroxing those magazine articles and term papers, send in your spare copies of books, buttons and photos, donate a subscription and back issues of your newsletter to the LHA. That way the next researcher on bisexual issues will find more than four manila folders of bistory awaiting her!

BISEXUALITY

A National Newsletter

For info,

send SASE to:

Gibbon Publications

P.O. Box 20917

Long Beach, CA 90801-3917

Stand Up, from page 1

other because are enemies are the same.

The most powerful and moving moment of the conference for me was when Lisa Power sent us messages of support from Guadalajara, Mexico, Soweto, and other places around the world. She reiterated that we are part of the struggle for lesbian and gay rights.

Further greetings also came from the National Bisexuals Project in Japan. Bisexual people so often feel isolated and invisible that to know people around the world recognise your right to exist is indescribably comforting.

"As far as I'm concerned, being any gender is a drag."

— Patti Smith, b. 1943
American singer

Reflections By a Bi at the NGLTF Conference

By Robyn Ochs

The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force's "Creating Change" conference in Minneapolis was truly an amazing conference, and the seeds for much change were indeed sown. Before the official start of the conference, the NGLTF held two day-long institutes: one on fundraising for gay/lesbian organizations, and the other an organizing institute for people of color. About 100 people attended each event. The next day the conference organizers, expecting 500 at the main conference, were surprised when more than 700 registered. They responded miraculously, and things moved along quite smoothly. The conference focussed on creating change, addressing issues including legislative lobbying, outing, and building multicultural organizations. An entire program track of five workshops, attended by 50 or so students and a few university professionals, focussed on campus concerns. The campus track was the only one, with the exception of the panel I will describe below, that included the "b-word" in the title and used inclusive language throughout. This is reflective of the trend across the U.S. of student groups changing their names to explicitly include bisexuals.

The first day at the institute was hard for me personally. I felt very much in the minority. The b-word was mentioned only once, in passing. I was sitting with Woody, a friend and bi-organizer from Philadelphia, and we both felt invisible. I donned my Bisexual Pride button with some fear. I knew I belonged at the conference, having been a loudmouth les-bi-gay activist for years now,

but I had no confidence that others would know I belonged. To tell you the truth, my internalized biphobia reared its ugly head, and I really wanted to be invisible, anonymous, to just blend in with the other dykes. But that wasn't why I came, so with heart in mouth I did the dirty deed and wore my button with as much pride and bluster as I could muster. A couple of hours into the fundraising institute, I went into the hallway for a break and saw to my great relief another Bi Pride button. I almost shrieked with relief. I was even more relieved when I looked up and saw that the wearer of the button was none other than Kawaza Imara (formerly Ron Franklin), one of the organizers of the 1990 Bisexual Conference. A few minutes later I spotted a Bi-phobia Shield button on Tanya, whom I had also met in San Francisco. By late that evening, we had increased our bisexual "network" to about a dozen. We all displayed our little bi buttons. We decided that there ought to be a bisexual caucus and, as none had been scheduled during official caucus time, we put up signs announcing our own. Over the course of the weekend we collected about 30 bisexuals and many allies.

I attended this particular conference because I was asked to be on a panel on "Bisexuality and the Gay and Lesbian Political Movement." This panel was moderated by John D'Emilio, co-author of *Intimate Matters: A History of Sexuality in America*, and co-chair of the NGLTF's Board of Directors. Panelists were myself, Brad Robinson (a bi activist formerly of Western Mass. and now of San Francisco, who is involved with Queer Nation, ACT UP, New Pacific Academy, and other groups), Kawaza Imara of Oakland, Calif. (a co-coordinator of the 1990 Bisexual Conference and the Bisexual People of Color Caucus), Duncan Teague of Atlanta, Ga. (New Pacific Academy, Black and White Men Together, the African-American Lesbian and Gay Alliance), and Lisa Power of London (Secretary General of the International Lesbian and Gay Association). Brad, Kawaza and I spoke as bisexuals, and Lisa and Duncan as lesbian and gay allies. A number of issues were addressed: how the gay/lesbian

Mythbusters continued on next page

What do Martina Navratilova, Susie Sexpert (of *On Our Backs* fame), Pete Townsend (of The Who) and Holly Near have in common? Find out in the next issue of *BiWomen*! (Or do you already know?)

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"We shall not really succeed in discarding the straight jacket of our own cultural beliefs about sexual choice if we fail to come to terms with the well-documented, normal human capacity to love members of both sexes."

—Margaret Mead

SUMMER PEOPLE

by Marge Piercy

Review by Sharon Gonsalves

What caught my eye about this book was that the main character is a bisexual woman who is involved with a married couple. I know how few authors write about bisexuals so it's always nice to read novels with people like me in them. Well, this book turned out to be a disappointment in several ways, but it kept my attention and had me going back for more.

Summer People is sort of a character study. Piercy takes us inside each character's head and shows us their thinking, so we view this three-way relationship from three perspectives. All three main characters are creative individuals: Willie a sculptor, Susan a fabric designer and Dinah a composer. Dinah is clearly the most sympathetic character, and Susan the least so.

Marge Piercy has written so eloquently and well of women loving women in the past. I had hoped she would portray bisexuality in a more positive light. Dinah, the only character who identifies as bisexual, has a history of sexual relationships with women dating back to her days in a women's rock band. Apparently, the women's movement opened her eyes to the possibility of same-sex relationships. She is Susan's first woman lover and becomes involved with Susan, and then later with Willie. Dinah has a house next door to Susan and Willie and a life of her own. We see three couplings rather than a threesome, but these folks act as a family and everyone seems comfortable. Their relationship is successful for ten years before the balance is upset by Susan's decision to stop seeing Dinah. Susan has the expectation that her husband will also stop seeing Dinah and for a while he does. Once Dinah and Willie get back together, Susan becomes very isolated. Through the twists and turns of a few subplots everyone ends up happily, heterosexually, monogamous.

Piercy does a good job of showing how an individual could become so isolated in this situation. These characters really do behave the way some people behave in relationships. And for all of Susan's whining and uncommunicativeness I could see little glimpses of myself in her behavior. What I had a hard time believing was that these three could have a successful ten-year relationship without doing very much "processing". Nonmonogamy is not easy. It takes a lot of work to pull it off. Susan and Dinah hardly talk about their breakup. They don't share their feelings with one another and it doesn't seem as if they would talk anymore if

they didn't both have Willie to talk to. Nobody gets possessive. Dinah has no problem being the third wheel. They don't know other people who are nonmonogamous or bisexual. Where is their support network?

My problem with Willie is that he sees his lovers as "my women." He recognizes that men envy him because they perceive him as keeping two women satisfied. He must be some kind of a stud. In the chapters where Willie is the focus we don't ever really get inside him. We have less connection to his emotional side than we do to either of the women. Perhaps this is a reflection of real life. The other serious problem I had with the male characters in this book is that Willie's and Susan's son, Jimmy, nonchalantly has sex with a gay man in order to get work from him. Jimmy's insincerity offended me. He wasn't very

Summer People continued on next page



Mythbusters, from previous page

community has created a closet within the closet, how that weakens all of us, what we have to gain by working together, how we define our community, how we define "lesbian," "gay," and "bisexual," whether recognizing bisexuals as part of the "community" dilutes or strengthens us as a community, etc. Many people spoke from the audience, presenting a variety of viewpoints ranging from welcoming to hostile.

At the final plenary session three groups read statements: the student caucus, the people of color caucus and the bisexual caucus. I was ecstatic to find that both the student and people of color caucuses made specific references to bis and transgender people as part of the community. The bisexual statement, which Kawaza read, thanked the conference organizers for programmatically addressing bisexuality at the conference for the first time and encouraged them to continue and further this necessary and important dialogue.

Looking back, I am so glad to have been there. A very important dialogue was begun in the NGLTF, which is a key organization in our community. I was very impressed by the NGLTF's commitment to multiculturalism, which was evidenced by the People of Color Institute, by the many panels that addressed multiculturalism and oppression, and by the energy of the women and men who attended the conference and engaged in challenging and difficult dialogues. We certainly aren't there yet, but I think we're on the right road. I want to see more bis taking visible roles AS BISEXUALS in les-bi-gay activism, and I hope that even more bisexual activists attend the next NGLTF conferences in Washington, D.C., in 1991 and in Los Angeles, Calif., in 1992. ▀

BiWomen

1991 International Women's Day Video Festival

Call For Tapes

The *Seventh Annual International Women's Day Video Festival* invites women to submit videotapes that explore the theme: **Women and Change**. This festival provides women from a variety of cultures the opportunity to exchange news, perspectives and insights through videotapes produced by women that reflect personal, political, social, historical and community change.

All tapes are welcome, from novice to professional. Submissions in languages other than English are encouraged. When possible, written translations are appreciated.

The Festival will take place on March 10, 1991 in the form of a five-hour live cablecast in the Boston area.

The deadline for all entries is **January 1, 1991**. For entry forms and submission information, write: International Women's Day Video Festival, P.O. Box 176, Boston MA 02130 or call Abigail Norman, Somerville Community Access, at (617) 628-8826.

A new Anthology by and about: Women Who Have Left Their (Non-Infant) Children

Call For Papers

Whether your children were left in the care of father, grandparents, other relatives, friends or the State, your experiences are important and need to be read by others.

Any known published or unpublished research or other works of writing could be invaluable in facilitating women "breaking silence", and would be appreciated, as well.

Editor is experienced as a facilitator of writing, is a writing graduate student, has fifteen years experience as a non-custodial parent of a (now adult) child, is the sole parent of another, and is willing to work with tentative and/or inexperienced writers as well as confident writers.

Please send inquiries or manuscripts of twenty pages or less along with self-addressed stamped envelopes to: Diane S. Lebeuf, P.O. Box 9203, Mills College, Oakland, CA 94613

Summer People, from previous page
good in his relationships with women either. Is Piercy suggesting that he learned all this from watching his parents in their open marriage?

Another thing I noticed was that Piercy writes much more graphically of the hetero sex than she does of the lesbian sex. Sex between

Susan and Dinah is less frequent and more implied, soft, feminine, and ethereal than any of the straight sex in the book. Another reflection of real life?

Summer People is a fun read, but I wouldn't recommend it to someone who was trying to learn about what it's like to be bisexual. There were no people like me in this book, or at least my experience of bisexuality is nothing like Dinah's. It makes me glad I do have the bi networks and a community to help me get along in a world that doesn't understand nonmonogamy, "alternative lifestyles," or same-sex love and relationships. We need to continue to write our own novels, life stories, songs, etc., and create a culture that speaks to our experience. ▼

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Send this form along with your check to:

BBWN
338 Newbury Street, 202C
Boston, MA 02115

Volunteers are needed to staff the BBWN/BBMN office at the Lesbian and Gay Community Center, 338 Newbury Street, Mondays from 6 to 9pm (or a portion thereof). Can you spare one Monday a month? Or two? Sign up at the office, or call (617) BIS-MOVE to volunteer. We will provide all the necessary training.

CALENDAR

THE CENTER
is the Lesbian and Gay
Community Center, 338
Newbury Street, Suite 202C,
Boston, MA 02115.

Ongoing Events:



Sundays:

Alateen Group open to bisexual, lesbian and gay youth 22 and under who are affected by alcoholism in a family member or a close friend. 6pm. At the Center.



Mondays:

Bisexual Alcoholics Anonymous. 7:30-8:30pm, Mass. General Hospital, under Amphitheater (go past the Lower Amphitheater, take stairs up 3 flights). Closed speaker-discussion. Info: leave message for Ingrid at (617) 641-3281.



Tuesdays:

Bisexual Women's Rap Group. 7:30pm-10pm at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant Street, Central Square, Cambridge, MA. All women welcome. Call (617) 354-6658 for more info.



Wednesdays

Bisexual Children of Alcoholics. 7:30pm. An Al-Anon meeting for bisexual children of alcoholics. Mass. General Hospital, lower amphitheater (next to the emergency room entrance), Boston, MA. Call Marge at (617) 259-1559 for more info.

December 1 • Saturday

Boston Lesbian and Gay Contra Dance Group. Traditional New England contra and square dances. No experience or partners necessary. All dances are taught. Soft-soled shoes are required. Dances are open to all lesbians, gays, bisexuals and their friends. All dances are smoke-, drug- and alcohol-free. First Church of Jamiaca Plain, corner of Centre and Eliot Streets in J.P. 8-11pm (beginners' lessons at 7:30pm) \$5. Info: Janet at (617) 522-2216.

December 2 • Sunday

Bi Space. 8pm. A place for all bisexual people to come together and meet and talk about bisexual issues. No agenda or set topic, just a friendly space for whatever develops. \$2 donation requested. Sponsored by the East Coast Bisexual Network. At the Center, Room 202K. Info: (617) 247-6683.

December 3 • Monday

BBWN Introductory Meeting. 7:30pm, Women's Ctr., 46 Pleasant Street, Cambridge, Mass. All women welcome.

December 4 • Tuesday

Bisexual Women's Rap Group. Topic: Men – Where do they fit? See *Ongoing Events column*.

December 5 • Wednesday

Bisexual, Lesbian, and Gay Rights Activists of Somerville and Surroundings (BLGRASS). 7pm. Info: Chris at (617) 666-9288.

December 8 • Saturday

Boston Lesbian and Gay Contra Dance Group. \$6. See December 1.

December 11 • Tuesday

Bisexual Women's Rap Group. Topic: Open Rap. See *Ongoing Events column*.

December 14 • Friday

Ballroom Dance at the Firehouse for Lesbians, Gay Men, and their Friends. At the Firehouse Arts Center, 659 Centre Street, Jamaica Plain, MA. \$6. Holiday Ball ("Creative Black Tie encouraged"). 9pm-12am. Beginners welcome (free dance lesson for beginners at 8:30pm). Info: (617) 524-3816.

December 15 • Saturday

BBWN/BBMN Monthly Brunch. At Mario's Restaurant, 25 Bow St., Union Square, Somerville. Meet outside at 10:45am. Info: (617) BIS-MOVE.

December 18 • Tuesday

Bisexual Women's Rap Group. Topic: Political Correctness. See *Ongoing Events column*.

December 19 • Wednesday

New England Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Veterans

meeting. At the Center, Room 202K.

December 20 • Thursday

Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Speakers Bureau meeting. 6pm-8pm at The Center. Info: (617) 354-0133.

December 29 • Saturday

Boston Lesbian and Gay Contra Dance Group. \$5. See December 1.

January 4 • Friday

Swingtime Boston Lesbian/Gay/Bi Swing & Ballroom Dance. 8:15pm-midnight. Swing and tango lessons 8:15-9pm. Dance the night away to the fabulous sounds of Cheek to Cheek, Boston's Lesbian and Gay Swing Orchestra. Smoke/alcohol-free. Beginners welcome. \$5. At the Old Cambridge Baptist Church in Harvard Square. Info: (617) 661-1792.

January 6 • Sunday

Bi Space. See December 2.

January 10 • Thursday

BiWomen Newsletter production night. 6-8pm at the BBWN office at the Center. Info: Kathy at (617) 666-8991.

January 11 • Friday

BiWomen Calendar deadline!!!! Submissions: Kathy at (617) 666-8991.

January 14 • Monday

BBWN Coordinating Committee meeting. 7-9pm. At the Center. Info: (617) BIS-MOVE.

January 16 • Wednesday

New England Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Veterans meeting. At the Center, Room 202K.

January 17 • Thursday

Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Speakers Bureau meeting. 6pm-8pm at The Center. Info: (617) 354-0133.

January 19 • Saturday

BBWN/BBMN Monthly Brunch. 10:45am. For location or more info: (617) BIS-MOVE.

January 28 • Monday

BBWN Volunteer Night to stuff the Feb./March newsletter. Please join us! It's much more fun when there's lots of us to stuff newsletters. Get your name on the Honor Roll! 6-10pm. At the Center. Info: (617) BIS-MOVE.

February 1 • Friday

Swingtime Boston Anniversary Sockhop! 8:15pm-midnight. Swing lesson 8:15-9pm. See January 4.

February 3 • Sunday

Bi Space. See December 2.